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KONYETZ

By
MARTIN HUSSINGTREE



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By MARTIN HUSSINGTREE

*Hodder and Stoughton
Limited London*

Made and Printed in Great Britain. Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London.

To
THE DASHNAKZUTUN
OF THE
SECOND INTERNATIONAL
IN GREAT ADMIRATION
AND
THANKS FOR
FEBRUARY 18, 1921

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Foreword

THE ending is wrong.

The end of Western Civilization is, of course, the correct one.

But then again, who knows?

The characters in this book are of little importance in the rapid sequence of fateful events, being but the unseen ball-bearings in the hub of Destiny's wheel.

Since the first chapter was written events have somewhat overtaken me, and I never thought it possible that the Turk be replaced in his 1914 position, all ready for the next trouble in Balkania.

But it will only hasten things.

I have, however, left it unaltered.

M. H.

Keringet, Molo . . . Red Sea . . . Astley.

THE world was in torment. Hate and envy reigned supreme ; and mistrust of man and indifference to God held universal sway.

This was some few years after the First European War.

Civilization had failed ; failed because it was unnatural ; failed because it was too material. The long years of scientific discovery had made mankind less dependent on himself ; while the work he used to do gave way to an excess of pleasure for which he now had much time.

Religion had failed, for there was no unity ; and a mass of wavering churchmen, in England, fought among themselves ; swinging blindly from fantastic anarchy to superstitious tyranny, and back again.

There was a mass of sects, biting and slandering—sects who, intolerant of belief in the psychical world and doubtful of the accuracy of facts in modern history, had implicit faith in the reports of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the four great journalists.

Politicians strove for power.

Aristocratic Ministers had laid up nice little wars for the future and made England's name stink in the nostrils of all foreigners. They had lied too much and broken too many promises. Their words were as air.

Hebrew Ministers longed for titles, and had visions of becoming old Scot families.

Plebeian Ministers wasted their breath and broke in barrel-tops, by cursing social conditions instead of working to better them.

Capitalists trampled on the people, and the people bit the Capitalist in the heel.

The Public Schools continued to turn out stereotyped lordlings, and the National Schools turned out Revolutionaries.

People in high places continued to publish indiscretions.

It was an odd world. It was dancing mad, pleasure mad, arguing mad. Nobody paid attention to any one else, and nobody cared whether they did or not. Civilization was having its last fling; drunk with a sub-conscious feeling that the end of all things was in sight.

And this was before the coming of Ogóne . . . and Ogóne means Fire.

* * * * *

The Labour Party had now been in power a whole year, and during that time had shown a capacity for government that surprised the Opposition and pleased the country.

The Party had gone about its new business warily and sensibly, taking advice from those who knew, and ridding the public offices of those who did not. The Cabinet, although composed for the most part of genuine Labour men, had a small sprinkling of ex-Conservatives who had put their country before party and were working in complete harmony with their former opponents. The greatest changes were effected in the Education Department where younger and more modern men took the place of Latin Professors, and were immediately responsible for the introduction of better teachers in the National Schools. A small technical syllabus was introduced into these schools and the age for attendance was extended. The Labour Party had the sense to know its limitations and left the Treasury alone ; relying on that branch of the Civil Service to continue its excellent work of the past. As regards the Foreign Office, there were unfortunately few changes, and this was to prove the Government's weakest point.

As things stood then, the *Entente Cordiale* was theoretically still alive, and Belgium was occasionally patted on the back. Germany, although increasing her trade, was still pitied, and treated as a very sick man. The Soviet Government of Russia continued to drag out an existence, living on an exhausted population. In the Colonies, there was little trouble ; colonial interest was

not very strong. India had been a united assortment of republics for two years past, and was enjoying a real sense of freedom ; doing what she liked, fighting the whole while and exporting little. Japan, away in the east, was very prosperous, and England was no longer shackled with an alliance in that quarter, since North America had so skilfully pointed out its fallacies to a former British Cabinet.

Trade was doing fairly well ; workers were a little freer and had, in many cases, a share in the profits of their industries. There were still hard-headed capitalists about—a few of them ; and soft-headed agitators—a good many of them. Socialism raised its head in many forms ; but, for the most part, it was a doctrine of hate. True Socialism had never seemed successful—perhaps it was not meant for this world : who knows ?

The House of Lords had been completely reformed. No longer was a selection of insignificant gentlemen to sit and yawn in the gilded Chamber ; now each county sent its elected representative. They were still called dukes, or marquises, or lords, or whatever it was, but it hurt nobody. Some Socialists thought it made a difference, but it did not, really ; for there were still Socialists who said a lot of things that did not matter and forgot brotherhood—the essential quality of their creed.

There was a King. He did no more than usual

and no less. Some people liked to see him about ; others hated it, and hissed when he passed ; but then again, they wanted something to hiss at, and would have missed him had he been deposed.

Individuals still demonstrated in the Park. Some waved a Union Jack and asked for a return of Conservatism or Liberalism or Coalitionism. Others waved a red flag and shouted for a Socialist Government or a Soviet Government or no Government at all. Englishmen enjoyed life on the whole ; nobody was particularly excited until . . . well, until the month of June of this strange year.

The trouble came from the Near East. It had been foreseen long before by individuals whose business it was to look for such events, but the then aristocratic Government had laughed all fears away. The immediate aftermath of the First European War had left a situation, in the Near East, full of danger. At the Armistice of 1918 two things should have been done at once—the chief towns in Turkey should have been occupied and Trans-Caucasia strengthened. Instead of this, England chose to play with Mesopotamia and Palestine, holding the bottom of the bottle rather than the neck. The first sign of trouble after this was the rising of Mustapha Kemal Pasha and the end of any control Britain might have had in dictating the Peace. Shortly after this, the neck of the bottle started closing

and the first big blow at British control over Persia and India was struck by Russia who seized Azerbaijan by force and massacred the Tartar population. This even did not disturb the British Foreign Office. However, thinking it as well to finish off Mustapha Kemal, they ordered Armenia to do the work and supplied them, for that purpose, with old rifles and odds and ends of uniforms. Armenia, weak from warfare since 1914, and terrified by the Russians now in Azerbaijan, was unequal to the task and capitulated after the fall of Kars in November 1920.

The next step against Britain was taken in the following December when the Bolshevik 11th Army calmly walked into Armenia and allied herself to Mustapha Kemal. In the following March Russia took Georgia by force and thus had complete control of Trans-Caucasia, leaving England with an eastern enemy line from Ineboli to Afghanistan. And still England preferred to hold Mesopotamia and Palestine.

From this time onwards Persia, swayed by the wind from Russia, became infested with Bolshevik agents. Thus the way was cut from Mesopotamia to India and still the British Government of those days slept and amused herself by hurling Greece against Mustapha Kemal Pasha. Again we come on to the time of this strange year, when the Labour Party was in control of the dwindling British Empire. The dark rumours reported in

the French Press, came from Poland, and Paris was sore troubled. It appeared that Russia had at last started an open traffic in arms through Poland into Germany ; and the Poles, threatened from both sides, had allowed these things to continue. Germany was arming, her revenge was coming. But the English Press and people, bless their hearts, were merely indignant. According to them, France was hysterical, bent on causing trouble, imperilling the *Entente*, and anything else derogatory.

All of a sudden, when France was threatening to advance her Rhine Army again, Mustapha Kemal walked fast towards Beyrouth and Jerusalem, and the Russian Eleventh Army left Julfa for Mesopotamia. The British Foreign Office was quite perturbed and hastily looked through her list of small friendly nations who, in exchange for a few tons of coal, would be willing to harass Kemal. Armenia was out of the question, she had been betrayed once too often. Greece—no, she had had enough the last time she obeyed Downing Street. What about Persia ? Yes, she might do for a while. So the Government wired in code to Teheran and suggested to the British Minister there to try and make Persia stand in Russia's way for a bit and name her own price. The price did the trick and Persia agreed, cash in advance. The Bolshevik Minister smiled and gave certain orders to his agents. The Persian

troops moved north-west and met the Russians, changed their flags for red ones and dispersed on plundering expeditions. Then the Persian War Minister told the English there had been a mistake, and that he did not think it wise to attack Russia. Could the English Treasury have the money back, then? No answer was received; communications seemed to be cut. "What an extraordinary way to behave!" murmured the Permanent Secretary to the Foreign Office.

Anyhow, the British Flying Squadrons in Mesopotamia were ordered into the air, but given strict instructions not to fire at the invaders till further orders, or rather, till the Government had found out what was happening. And so Moscow and Angora were asked to explain their attitude. Both replies were typical.

Thus Moscow: "Seeing the oppressed races of Mesopotamia groaning under the yoke of capitalistic, bourgeoisistic misrule, and being asked by the slaves of British serfdom to help throw off the oppressors: we, the Russian Socialistic Federative Sovietic Republic have rushed to the aid of our comrades. Long live the Proletariat!"

Thus Angora: "The National Government of Turkey, sitting at Angora, have waited long and patiently for Great Britain and France to evacuate the territory she tore from its rightful owners by force, but seeing that reason has not entered into the minds of the afore-mentioned Powers: under

the banner of Mohammed we march to regain our rights."

* * * * *

Then somewhere in the North of England a clergyman made a sermon on the Beast from the North and how he united with the false prophet. But for so long had the British Government taught that 2 and 2 make 5, that people still slept and, at the most, merely turned in their sleep or snored with self-satisfaction.

* * * * *

At the receipt of Moscow's apparent declaration of hostilities the British Government held a Cabinet Council.

"Was the Prime Minister aware of the course of events?" The Prime Minister was aware of certain rumours. "Did the Prime Minister intend to arrest the Russian advance?" The Prime Minister did not believe a country would advance after what had taken place at the Washington Conference. "And if it were true?" The Prime Minister would inquire the reasons of the Russian Trade Unions and thereby stop further war by treaty with the Proletariat. "But there are no Trade Unions." Nevertheless he was certain the Proletariat would not fight if it only knew the facts; and he would inform them thereof. "If the Russians and Turks paid no attention, what would the Government do?" They would call a Conference and discuss the matter. "And if

Russia and Turkey would not attend ? ” The Prime Minister considered that an extraordinary statement and thought the Minister of War had been talking with Capitalists before the meeting and had been wrongly influenced. “ Then you think there is no cause for alarm ? ” The Prime Minister was certain of the commonsense of the International Proletariat.

Nevertheless in spite of Notes and summonses, entreaties and threats, the invaders paid no attention, captured a few aeroplanes and advanced without opposition ; save hard by Aleppo, where the French had determined to call a halt.

* * * * *

And away in the North of England a clergyman drew a simile between the battle of Armageddon in the Book of the Revelation and the approaching battle in the Plain of Megiddo.

* * * * *

Soon it became known that a Mohammedan Russian Division had swung east from Julfa and was now making for Teheran. The Persian Government protested, shook, protested again, deposed the Shah and declared for Communism. This all happened within a week. Moscow smiled ; France was indignant ; American millionaires prophesied strange things, but England—it was simply beyond her comprehension, chiefly because in the past she had been used to relying on the information of her aristocratic representatives

and had not yet learned to probe deeper. Also she had long discredited all secret and reliable information as being undemocratic. One or two newspapers, whose directors were not looking for titles, were apprehensive and tried to wake up the country to consequences. Other papers urged the people not to jump to conclusions and remarked that John Bull was not done with yet. The Labour Press urged the people not to be led away by the Capitalist Press. So all three energetically wrote a lot of useless articles on the situation ; and even then some articles were more useless than others.

A weekly journal was quite entertaining and published a varied series of views by an equally varied assortment of people.

Lord Alma, the famous soldier-sportsman wrote :

“ It is most extraordinary to me to think that the British attitude of to-day is similar to that of 1914. The old country always seems to take a long time to wake up. Of course there is no doubt that when that happens we shall be a match for any one. An Empire that has been brought up on horse-racing, cricket and boxing is bound to come out on top. My message to the country ? —well, let’s all pull together ; stick to our work and our play and do what we are told. We shall be all right, have no fear.”

Mr. Hurley, the Labour leader, gave the following :

“Owing to the present circumstances I find it increasingly difficult to opine what is likely to result. In spite of the maledictions of certain capitalists, I am unable to visualize any other policy different to that which my party holds ; or to consider for one moment that it be possible to obtain a better Government. The masses are of course, solid behind their elected leaders. . . . ‘Foreign situation,’ you say ? Ah well, I don’t see much wrong with it at present, but you never know.”

The next man to be interviewed was Ebenezer Walford, the centenarian postmaster of Little Rundy-in-the-Woald, who for some eighty years past had taken a great interest in politics. This was reprinted from a local newspaper which, in the advance of democracy and consequent national and lingual emancipation, had taken to writing in dialect :

“Them Rooshans again, dear me. What with them Rooshans and them Turrks, ye doan’t know where ye are. Aye, Oi moind we gave un a durned good kickin’ last toime and if they doan’t mind where they be a steppin’, there’s no knowing what’ll ‘appen to un. Oi’ll wager Government’ll put it roight same as they did that there penshun Oi ‘ad for Garge (or were it Albert ?) when ‘ee were killed by them Germhuns. Oh ah, there’s them Germhuns too. Oi shouldn’t wonder nor they’ll be causing some ructions just now. Ah,

Oi always was a 'and at politics and Oi reckon Oi knew as much as most folks in moi time. When we gets arter the Rooshans Oi reckun as they'll agree with we: There's no place like 'ome."

Mr. Stenson-Proudman, the leader of the Communist Party in England, then had his say:

"I take no interest in *bourgeois* governments. There is only one way of escaping war and that is to turn ourselves into a Communistic state. Russia? Well, what's wrong with it? All these stories about massacres and horrors are purely capitalist propaganda. I don't care if people have been to Russia and seen them. I say it's not true. They are capitalist spies. But even if these stories are true, there is no more harm in killing capitalists than in killing any other sort of parasite. The Bolshevizing of the world is bound to come; that I'm certain of; so it makes no difference what measures are taken by our *bourgeois* Government. If only the British Working Man would realize what Communism would really do for him, there would be a greater chance of peace. But collectively he is a fool and must be taught. We are teaching him and he will learn the truth."

So none of the great men were helpful.

Anyhow events moved fast, but they were so far away that England could not be bothered. Even if the Bolsheviks did go towards India, it did not matter—India was independent; it was

her business. The Russians had no fleet so they could not invade England. What was that about arms sent to Germany? Nonsense . . . as foolish a story as the one about Russians coming through England in 1914. Come, come, we must not be stampeded. Who will win the Derby? Will Kent win the Championship? Is it true Walkins is to play for Hampstead United next season? Did you see the boxing the other night? I hear Cochran has great plans in view for this autumn.

And meanwhile, what did the British Government do about Mesopotamia? The War Office wired to the Air Vice-Marshal or whoever controlled military operations in those parts and ordered the squadrons to retire on Palestine, harassing the enemy the while; keep a lookout for fresh enemy movements and report to Jerusalem for further orders. Well, the result was a peaceful evacuation of Mesopotamia and great joy to statisticians who at last had the opportunity of working out how many rupees the Government had spent there per minute, hour, day, week, month, year and whole period.

* * * * *

The same clergyman in the North of England was talking about the Mark of the Beast on the forehead, and buying and selling with the Stamp of the Beast in the hand. He remarked how strange it was that all Bolsheviks wore a five-

pointed star on their foreheads and were unable to buy or sell without that star on the permission in their hand. Strange clergyman. Where did the old man get his ideas from? Fantastic old thing.

* * * * *

What of France? She wrote to Angora and informed Mustapha Kemal Pasha that she was not going to stand his Turkish behaviour and she would hold Syria to the end. And the day after the dispatch of this Note a transport left Marseille and a transport left Oran; and the one contained artillery and the other a battalion of the Foreign Legion and a regiment of Spahis. The Turkish advance continued and more transports left Marseille.

The French Press, whilst warning the country of early developments in Europe, concentrated its energies on the preservation of Syria, for which land so much French blood had been spilt. In Turkey the 'mullahs' exhorted the Faithful to a Holy War. Kharpoot, Byazed and Nachitchevan, the three propaganda towns of Turkey, took officers to their bosom and trained them as Vallis for Baghdad and Caifa and El Djezair.

The Near East was awake. In spite of bribing of chieftains, irrigation schemes and Hebrew Administration, the Arab remained true to his religion and looked to the Turk as an emblem of the old order and comfortable living. Prophets

and seers wrote screeds and some more knowing people wrote of the Turkish hope of mighty Empires and the return, with interest, of the glory that was.

The British Government was next approached by France, who urged an allied expedition from the Dardanelles, south-east. Would Britain agree? Should there be trouble in Constantinople she might send a ship, but attack Turkey? . . . that would be Imperialism. Then in the middle of this exchange of private Notes, the British Minister of the Interior accused the Foreign Secretary of Secret Diplomacy and the Notes were thereupon published; much to Turkey's satisfaction.

The Correspondent of the *Morning News* in Pekin, one day shortly after this, wired to his paper strange news, and the following morning thinkers and politicians were interested to learn that a Revolution had broken out in Pekin and that China had now declared herself a Sovietic Republic.

Events were moving fast.

News came through from the Near East and it appeared that Red Mohammedan troops had occupied Kerkuk and Baghdad; Basra was in the hands of Persian robber bands and large Turkish forces were attacking Aleppo. The French started hurrying troops across, as she well knew the fighting qualities of the "Meh-

meds," and was expecting a hard struggle ; but she was not rash. She knew what she could spare and what was necessary to keep control on her Rhenish frontier.

And on top of this again came news of an organized concentration of Arabs under Turkish and Russian officers at El Arish and Akaba.

The House of Commons wished to know about this. The answer was strangely typical : " His Majesty's Government have no reliable information on this subject, but is in constant communication with His Majesty's High Commissioner in Jerusalem." Some people thought it would be a good opportunity to send men to Arabia to sound the Arabs and prevent trouble. A well-known name was mentioned. Nothing happened. Certain Government officials in the Colonial and War Offices were still jealous of the success that had attended this man's former exploits. And so it went on. Blind, blind ; all blind. Walking towards the pit, riding on a mule, a card on its tail on which was written : " The British Empire is all right. We always muddle through." Well-known Imperialist catchwords, still on the lips of the people, in spite of Labour control. In spite of changes, the rulers of Great Britain were still of the same generation as those who had prepared the Great War of 1914 ; had passed the war in shouting and weeping, played like an Urban District Council at the Treaty of Versailles,

and had handed over all Eastern control to the Jews. On the other hand, those men who but some ten years previously had saved the State, had been kept in their place and mocked as children not knowing their own mind. They were the soldiers and sailors, the temporary saviours of mankind, paid for their job, and having done it, were kicked into the street and their employment taken by those who had contributed nothing but words to the common cause. And still the Red Mohammedan hordes moved on, determined to retake what Turkey had lost, and the opposition came only from the French. England received the latest bulletins with unconcern. She had watched for some time past the rapid waning of the one-time glorious British Empire and was prepared to take events as they came.

India, the great United Free Indian Republic, had entered into an agreement with Russia and was exporting wheat thither as fast as she could in exchange for soldiers with which to subdue certain fighting castes who had been causing trouble.

The scales were being laden and the weight was against Britain. The bitter smelling stew was frothing and bubbling, every second it was nearing the edge. The day was coming; and blissfully ignorant and petty remained the waning British Empire. The newspapers called each other scare-mongers when the one began to see

consequences, just as was done in 1914. One paper had the effrontery to remark that perhaps six fighting aeroplanes were not enough to protect England. Its adversary thereupon published an article on Peace and the Washington Conference.

Nevertheless there was an expectant atmosphere in some quarters, more especially in the War Office and Admiralty. The Naval authorities suggested Naval Manœuvres as a means of fore-gathering the reserves. The Government denounced this as 'military provocation.' Retired Admirals threw ink all over their letters in writing to the papers and showing the obvious result of unpreparedness. One member in the House of Commons finished off a speech with: "And you, the British Government, have lied and pandered and crawled; spat on the blood our brothers shed in the late war, and are stumbling like cowed fools to the brink and the end. God grant when the crash comes you may be the first to fall." Order, order. Withdraw, withdraw. . . . And others said, "Poor fellow, he is mad. He was hit on the head in the German War."

Shortly afterwards a French correspondent in Riga reported a new agreement between the Russian Soviet and Germany, whereby certain officials were named who should hand over and receive arms and ammunition at given points

on the Russian frontier at a date to be named later.

The French Press burst out with: "*Gare aux Bosches*" and "*La prochaine guerre est prête à s'éclater.*" And the English Press replied with: "French hysterics" and "Makers of War."

What fun they had in those days: fighting and scratching, shrieking and slandering, and all unaware of what Divine Providence had in store for a betrayed civilization. Shades of our dead. . . . how they must have smiled . . . wanly and sadly. Was there ever such a rapid sequence of events? And nobody could honestly blame the Government. They had taken over control, trained by Liberal thought which held that disarmament meant peace and that top-hats, black gloves and a smile were worth more than a rifle and bayonet. They had found a world in torment and they—being British—had lacked sufficient foresight. Yet the day was at hand. The day of revenge and hatred, of reaction and death. Yet London went on dancing. Have no fear for that. And somebody or other got thousands of pounds for hitting somebody else in the face to the admiration of white-shirted sportsmen. And people hit balls over nets for all they were worth; and yet they could not avert ultimate destiny. If some sergeant, on the other hand, scored ten bulls out of ten, and some corporal won a bayonet fighting contest, what

did it matter as long as Miss Betty Twigg won the beauty prize at Yarmouth sands, and thereupon received a cinema engagement. Essentials gave way to non-essentials all along the line and nobody was afraid or could possibly imagine why certain people should be apprehensive. Only Poland, for some reason or other, began to fear for her safety and asked France to increase her military mission. Which thing she accordingly did, and at once.

Then Russia walked into Poland and marched on Warsaw and thus the first blow was struck in the West. France saw the plot. She screamed it aloud, she mobilized in a frenzy and cried to England: "We told you! We told you!"

But what was ever the use of crying "We knew! We knew!" when the blow had fallen and the souls were rising. And then Ogóne appeared and spoke . . . and Ogóne means Fire.

IT was just four o'clock of a late autumn evening and the sun's rays were tingeing the walls of the old rectory, while the tall cedar tree in the garden was stretching long waving shadows towards the house. It was so still and calm round this rectory, so satisfying, so comforting. Away at the foot of the garden in a little green field, a cowman was slowly driving his cows to their shed. . . . The church clock, hard by, boomed four. A cat slid fearfully out of the half-opened church door and disappeared amongst the tombstones. Inside the library of this house, watching these scenes through the closed window, there stood a man. A tall, fair man, broad in the shoulders, slim in the waist. His head, with its high white brow, was slightly on one side; his eyes half-closed—watching the cat disappear amongst the tombstones. A small pointed fair beard was unable to hide the beauty of his mouth. His moustache was also kind in that respect.

Sitting by the tea-table and gazing into the fire, there sat a young girl of some twenty-four

years—not pretty—but nevertheless attractive, with large brown eyes and a sensitive mouth. Her nose, slightly too arched, spoilt the effect ; but she looked interesting. By her dress, one would have said she was either poor or odd—she was both. At least, no odder than many others, but to the majority, to the lessening majority, decidedly out of the ordinary. There had been a long silence.

“ I think,” said the girl quietly, “ your beliefs cannot give you any satisfaction ; real satisfaction, I mean. I do not see how it is possible not to fear death if you have no organized, no ordered religion.”

The man opened his eyes and the soul in them became visible. He looked tired, but there was fire, there was vitality behind those large blue eyes of his. He frowned slightly.

“ Because my religion is simple ; because the belief I hold is not supported by priests, and candles, and altars, and crucifixes, it is none the less real—none the less ordered. I feel my religion always. I see it always. I see it now in this sad sunset. You cannot see yours unless you go to church. And then I don’t think you see its entirety. It is too complicated, too artificial.”

The girl raised her eyebrows. “ Why artificial ? ” she asked.

“ Because it was created. Created for you by enthusiasts. Enthusiasts who, being ignorant,

attributed divinity to a mortal more clever, more lovable and above all more magnetic than themselves."

"You refer to the apostles?"

"I do. It is easy for one who knows the Near East as I do, to see how such a man as Christ appeared to his disciples to be too wonderful to have been born in an ordinary manner. Even nowadays over there amongst the Arabs and Jews, if a man is brilliant or wonderful he is called a prophet. It is quite common to hear really good old mullahs, or cadis, or pashas even, called 'rassoul.' It seems to me so natural."

The girl smiled slowly. "Then you think all Christ did was invented? That these men, these apostles were—well—liars?"

"Lorna," said the man, still gazing through the window, "that is an old and rather faded question, hardly worthy of you. If you ever go to Palestine, and cure a man of fever by keeping him warm and in bed, you may be quite certain that the poor and ignorant will say and believe you 'raised that man from the dead'; which saying, of course, is the eastern way of saying you cured him of his malady."

"And you think your explanation is sufficient? You think it satisfactory?"

"For my part—yes." And the man turned and walked slowly to the fire. Slowly he took a cigarette—a long, thin, carton-tipped one—from

his case. He lit it and sank back into a chair, smiling ; looking at Lorna, who was fingering her long string of amber beads

" You see," continued the man, " how akin your religion is to Mohammed's. You tell your beads, the same as they do. Tell me, what do you say as you pass each bead over ? "

" I don't do that. I was only thinking. . . . "

" What ? "

" How unhappy you must be." There was a pause.

" Perhaps," said the man. " Nevertheless," he added, " the time will come when I shall have finished my time here and my duty ; and it will be soon."

" And what do you consider your duty ? " she inquired.

" That I cannot tell you."

" Won't ! "

" No ; cannot."

" Does father know ? " asked Lorna.

" I think so, but he doesn't believe." Again a silence. The man sighed. " *Taak*," he murmured.

" You are always saying that, Shura. What does it mean ? "

" It is a useful, habitual word of my childhood in Russia. My father used to say it. . . . Everybody says it. It means ' so,' or ' thus,' or ' well, well ' ; anything. It is fatalistic. As a word, it accepts the inevitable."

"Are you proud of being half Russian, Shura?"

"Yes, quite. As a race we are unique. We've never done anything. People say Russia has only done two things—invented the 'samovar' and bolshevism. But they are wrong. That was invented by a German Jew. . . . But we have made music and song. We have loved. We have been sad. We have been of no use. But then, who has? I am proud, too, of the other half of me; but I don't find it so satisfactory. . . . It is great and wonderful and open-handed and honest; but always subdued in spirit, cold, worldly. The English habit of suggesting: 'Thank God I am not as other men' is sad for me. There is no real democracy in England. There never can be. In England, every man is an enemy until he is 'nice' to you. In Russia, every man is a friend until he curses you. I think Russia is better that way.

"The Turk has a good philosophy too. I once said to a peasant, 'Mohamed, how are you to-day?' and he answered, 'Very bad; no food, no clothes, only one wife—but I shall be all right in the next world.' I think that is the right spirit."

The girl was interested.

"Then you believe in another world? You hold a reason for existence?" she asked.

The man lit another cigarette.

"Certainly," he said. "I think it has been

ordained that mankind pass through a process of creation and purification, till it reaches what we can only call by the name of 'Heaven,' the final goal where we know the reason for it all, and where God is visible and tangible. This stage—this world, may be the first, or the second, or even the third one. I don't feel it can be much higher. I make Heaven the seventh world, simply to get my belief *ordered*." He accentuated the last word, and looked at Lorna. She was not looking. He continued :

"In the first, mankind may only have been smoke-forms with no action. Of course, in a completely different world, Mars, or Venus, or anywhere else. In the second, we have perhaps action of a sort, and the beginning of the mind. In this, or third sphere, we have the mind in lesser or greater degrees, desire and capability, savagery, ignorance and materialism ; without purpose, without reason. In the fourth—that is, the next world—we have thought, and working for elevation ; but it is a world controlled solely by will and thought. In the fifth, there comes an appreciation of the future, and a shriving of sin. The sixth is final preparation, and the seventh—well, Heaven. This world we live in is our Heaven or Hell of our former life, which of course may have been in the second sphere, or, more often, in the same ; for until a man is spiritually ready to progress to the next stage,

his spirit must come back again and again to this one. It is like a school. If you fail to get a 'remove'—I think you call it—you stay in the same form. It is very simple."

"And what about suicide?" came from Lorna, who was gazing at the man with a puzzled expression.

"That is easily answered. Each man has his allotted span. If he cuts it off by a year, or twenty years, or forty years, he will have to return and make it up. That's why so many people die young. Because in the past they took their own lives, sometimes a year too soon, in which case they are born again and die at one year old; or twenty years too soon; so these die at twenty. Of course, if they are killed—well, that is their allotted span. It was ordained."

"Then what is the reason for this continual shriving of mankind?"

"Who knows? Perhaps that's where the Devil comes in." He smiled.

"You mean, a kind of bet between God and Satan?"

"How crudely put!" And he turned to greet the Reverend Septimus Ridsdell, who had just entered.

The Reverend Septimus was a short, cheery little individual, fond of his port and his profession. A distant cousin of the man's mother. His wife had died many years ago, and his interests were

centred in his daughter Lorna and the human sheep of his Durham flock. In his eyes one would perceive a certain mysticism, accentuated by circumstance until his round red face receded and gave place to a face of humility and kindness. On the surface, a bluff gentleman, who takes delight in conviviality. At his entrance, his daughter rose and, without a word, left the room. The Reverend Septimus was surprised.

"Dear me," he said. "What on earth have you been saying to upset the apple-cart, Alexander Georgevitch?"

Shura raised his eyebrows and said: "You are late for tea."

"I don't want any," replied the clergyman. "I wanted to know why Lorna is upset."

"I didn't know she was. If she is, it is probably because her theological ideas do not coincide with mine, that's all."

"*Taak*," said the Reverend Septimus.

"Exactly," replied Shura. The clergyman sat himself down and produced a Ropp cherrywood pipe. Shura sat opposite, and lit another cigarette.

"I'm afraid," said the host after a pause, "my parishioners did not understand the theories and facts of the Book of the Revelation that you and I arranged for them."

"I didn't expect they would. Disbelief is so much easier; and all English people are proud

of individual belief. Why should they understand ? ”

Another pause. Then Shura continued : “ You remember that book by the Spaniard, Ibanez ? Well, I think he was wrong.”

The clergyman raised his head. “ In what way ? ”

“ Well, he makes all four horsemen ride at the same time. They don't. Conquest, the first horseman, has been riding from the Middle Ages till 1914. War rode in 1914 and will ride till this last trouble is over. Then Famine will ride, and lastly Death.”

“ The end of everything ? ”

“ Either of everything, or of Christianity, and the beginning of universal Islam, or Atheism. I still hold that the Beast from the North is Russia ; that the Dragon who gives him power is the Chinese soldier.” Shura rose, walked to the centre table and picked up a small, leather-bound book of certain age. He then resumed his seat.

“ This book of mine, published in 1827, is fanatical and calls the Beast the Church of Rome. He is right, however, about Turkey. It will do for reference.” He opened, and began searching for passages. He went on speaking :

“ ‘ And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed ; and all the world wondered after the Beast. . . .’ Of course, that refers to Lenin's wounds. He

was shot through both lungs and yet he lives. The doctors don't know why. All this about their self-satisfaction and blasphemy is obvious too. The Beast allies itself for the first time with the false prophet—Turkey. That also came true. Then comes the part you spoke about, when no man can buy or sell 'save he that had the mark or the name of the Beast. . . .' The voice of the lion is Marx: he was always called 'The Lion.' It then says the war shall be waged first of all for forty and two months. Bolshevism started in October 1917, and war was waged till April 1921, when Armenia was finally crushed. So you see, we are all right so far. It is exact. We have but to wait for Armageddon and the coming of God."

"You talk like the Russian in Ibanez's book," said the clergyman. "You have it on the brain."

"I'm afraid I never read the book till I had formed my own ideas, and you see they do not coincide."

"And does Lorna agree with you?" asked the clergyman.

"I have not spoken of that part to her. Events will prove. . . ."

There was a knock on the door, and the maid entered to clear away the tea, carrying the evening post on a small silver tray. There was one letter for the Russian, and several for his host.

They both opened their mail and became immersed therein. The silence was at length broken.

"I have just had a letter from the Patriotic Union," stated Shura, "and they want me to speak at the Albert Hall."

The clergyman looked up. "Well, you will, won't you?" he asked.

"Yes. I feel I have to. . . . I shall speak——"

"Under your own name?" interjected his host.

"No, under the name I write for the *Post*—Ogóne. I shall have to live up to that name. And I feel I shall," he added.

"When is it to be?"

"Next month; and I shall stay with the Almas, if they will have me. I am not fond of the family, but the old man is agreeable. I shall have to read up all your Badminton Library before I go, though. I cannot talk sense to hard-riding fox-chasers."

The maid went out with the tea-things. Lorna came in. She sat herself on a chair, hard and Victorian, midway between the two. Ogóne—for thus he shall be spoken of in the future—looked towards her, and the same quiet smile lit up his face.

"Well?" he said.

"You are not right according to worldly ideas; but you may be in the infinite," stated Lorna softly. She then hung her head.

"Has it worried you?" he asked. Then again: "Don't let it."

The Reverend Septimus burst out, holding a letter in his hand: "How on earth can I, on £300 a year, and fifty pounds income, be expected to send all my boots and all my old trousers to the Bishop's Fund for Destitute Hop-pickers?"

"Is it necessary?" asked his daughter.

Whether the worthy soul did, or whether he did not, does not concern us; but, with many a jest and many a serious discussion between the three, the days passed. The foreign news became still more threatening; the newspapers cried: "Stop the War," and fatuous old politicians, who had never done a day's work, and lived on vegetables, stood up in the Salle des Nations at Geneva and warbled about Disarmament. Some fool suggested that the old gentlemen should be given a platoon in the front line, near Warsaw. Other fools pitied the platoon. But they weren't really fools, the men who suggested these things. Only wrecks created by British foreign policy in the past. Men who, having saved the Empire once, were supposed to sit still and watch it thrown to the wolves by hunchbacked idealists and narrow-minded, short-seeing rascals. And they did sit still; and, strange to say, were apathetic—fatalistic. Thus did the rulers score and score again. The country was too numb, too broken to worry.

‘**MAKTOUB**’—it is written. Fate cannot be deceived.

Anyhow, Ogóne arrived in London and we find him seated, the evening before the meeting, in Lord Alma’s drawing-room, with his host standing back to the fire; his hostess perched carefully on the end of a sofa; his daughter, legs crossed, smoking a cigarette, and his son, fresh from Sandhurst, twirling his budding moustache.

“It can’t be as bad as you people think,” said his lordship.

“It will be,” said Ogóne.

“Dear Mr. Bobrishev, you are a pessimist, indeed you are,” said her ladyship.

“You think, Ogóne, we shall have a jolly old war?” inquired his lordship’s heir.

“You should know better than I.”

“How silly!” said his lordship’s daughter. She did not know why she made such a fatuous remark; but that was the extent of her small talk. That and such frequently recurring words as ‘awfully’ (in its wrong sense), ‘surprised’ (in its wrong sense), and ‘tedious’ (in its right sense). In fact, the whole family were typical of their breed. He—honest, brave, ignorant, superior, intolerant—the real backbone of England. She—conceited, snobbish, kindly, still more ignorant. The son—fond of companionship, of women, cigarettes (with gold tips—for that is the first stage. They allure), of his horse, bored

with his profession, proud of his moustache. The daughter—plays tennis, jazzes, plays accompaniments on the piano without expression—can't do more ; has never read a book worth reading, kisses men, also smokes cigarettes, knows nothing—doesn't want to. No wonder Ogóne found it difficult. There were times during that evening when he could have walked straight out of the room, gone to the pantry and had an interesting talk with the butler. It is strange, but butlers are often far more interesting to talk to than their masters ; and always more interesting than their mistresses.

The meeting had been billed for 2.30, and at 2.15 Ogóne made his way through a surging mob to the stage. The building was filling. The meeting was free. From top to bottom, the great hall seemed to Ogóne to resemble a dark sea, pulsating, rolling, tossing ; full of uncertainty and withal so drab. He was nervous. Nervous, because he had a message and he knew the public would not tolerate it. Nervous, because he had never spoken to such a large audience. No, not even when as a Social Democrat he addressed the people of Tiflis from the church steps in 1917.

He was roused from his reverie by a hand on his shoulder ; and a voice said : " You will speak last. Is that all right ? " Without looking up, Ogóne murmured " Yes," and continued watching the crowd stumbling to their seats. Suddenly

the blatant organ behind burst forth with the National Anthem. He rose slowly to his feet. It finished. He looked to his right and left, and recognized Middleman, the Union's President. He smiled, and sat. The meeting began.

Mr. Middleman—an aristocratic, squarely-built individual—then rose to address the people. With a great many 'ahs' and 'hems' he explained that the Government had been guilty of allowing this ghastly world-situation to come about and had taken no steps to stop it. It was perhaps hardly fair to blame this Government since, new to the job of governing, they had only continued to follow the methods of their predecessors who, it would be set down in history, were the real originators of the game of blindman's-buff in foreign affairs. The situation was full of danger. We had been driven out of Mesopotamia and Palestine. There was a revolt in Arabia, great sympathy with this rebellion in Egypt. The Russian Red troops had invaded Poland and were moving westwards; whilst he had just learnt that a whole Russian Army was over the Roumanian frontier prepared to join Turkey. These would then wipe up the Balkans, link up with the Red Army in Poland, and reach Germany. Then God alone knew what was going to happen; but France in apprehension had asked Britain for help, and the Government had not yet replied. The worthy gentleman was distraught and miser-

able when he realized how quickly the great British Empire had collapsed, and that the word of an Englishman was of less account in the world to-day than that of the smallest country in the world. There may be some present to-day, he thought, who did not approve of Empires and preferred to see England, Scotland and Wales alone. As far as he could see, they would have their chance soon ; and famine, ruin and misery would be the progeny of that belief. There were people who hissed when the Union Jack was hoisted. If they preferred another, they would have it soon. We were in no position to prevent invasion now ; the only thing to do was to send all our available strength to France as we had done in 1914, and if anybody thought we and the French could hold out, he was an optimist of a very singular order and certainly a civilian. People were crying, "Stop the War !" It reminded him of a chicken clucking to stop a steam-roller. And it amused him that those who cried, "Stop the War !" knew nothing about wars, and had done nothing during the last one but shout. He hoped they wouldn't get hoarse. (The audience thought this very funny.) England had not suffered in the last war. (Murmurs of dissent. Some one had probably been forced to work too hard then.) It was true, and he thought they would soon have a chance of suffering, when the enemy was in their own country. ("Never !

Never!" they shouted.) "I hope not," replied the speaker; and after nearly forty minutes of this jingoism Mr. Middleman sat down amidst a certain amount of applause. This speaker was the President of the Patriotic Union—an alarmist, a flag-waver, a stupid little patriot.

The secretary then made a long speech. Quite good, less alarming, with a tender appeal for unity and a little tear-stuff about children, and the women of England. It went down very well. He had 'got well across.' A retired General, who received much applause, spoke on the 'Rule Britannia' theme and the 'backbone of England.' Then he switched on to agriculture and spoke about the price of potatoes. He said he had been asked when land was likely to go up. He said the answer to that was: 'it would only go up when an earthquake came.' (Oh, he was a humorist, this old fellow!)

There had been about two hours' speaking when Ogóne rose. He was introduced by the Chairman as the well-known musical critic who wrote to the papers and a man who knew the Near East well. When Ogóne stood forward, his personality immediately took possession of the building. He was calm and subdued and his voice was heard at its best, rising and falling with that strange, soft intonation peculiar to Russians. His speech touched on the situation and touched on religion, not too much but enough to make

the audience realize he was no ordinary man. Then he spoke of prophecy and fatalism, and the people were interested. The silence was complete but for his voice. The movements of his hands were superb. After about half an hour :

“ I speak as a Russian, not as an Englishman. I speak as one who has tried to find a reason for facts, a reason for happiness, a reason for sorrow. I have travelled the world over and studied creeds and superstitions ; and, in my dealings with man, have tried to understand his soul. God gave this world to the people that their progression should be directed into love and faith ; that with the food of the soil they should live and that Nature should be their guide. But you, in your ignorance, have thought better. You have made of this world a cess-pit of materialism. You judge a man by his bank-balance, by his robbery of his fellow-creatures, by the stars on his breast, by the pearls of his wife, by the handle to his name. If a man has not made money, he is a fool ; if a man has not risen in your man-created social scale, he is a fool ; if a man gives himself away and does not fall in with all your requirements, he is a fool. He must deny his friends when it suits him ; he must cast his friend into prison if his friend does not agree with his doctrine ; and then, as a salve to all wounds, he must fling coins into the air for the paupers. Those paupers created by man-made law, by force, by

power ! Did God intend this ? He has given you, in His wisdom, a sphere in which you may move, and you have moved therein and rejoiced. At each invention you have praised yourselves. You cry, ' We are progressing.' You invent a railway train, a motor car, an electric light, an aeroplane, a murderous gas, a new plant, and you rejoice ; and the people find work easier and others are deprived of their livelihood and you create more plants to absorb them. You set more store by the machinery than by the souls of your workers. You keep them in hovels to build yourselves palaces. And the world says you are great, you are good. You speak of the survival of the fittest, and you think it is strength and brain. The spirit you have lost. Your religion is a jumble sale of platitudes, of impossibilities. It is a profession. And the word that is preached was made by man. By man so to order the lives of the people that your church may act as a second line of police. That you shall not marry, but a priest must give permission. That your child cannot be saved but a priest must throw water upon it. A bowing to the will of man and hiding it the while behind man-written copy-book headings. Is God so small ? Is God so weak ? Is the only way to know God the way of theatrical performances ? Will not what is decreed come about ? Cast aside your pride, your hypocrisy, your narrow-mindedness. Is Nature too foul to

be followed? Are the flowers and the hills and the coloured things inferior to your imitation? In England to-day a man may not weep lest he be seen; may not laugh lest he laugh too loud; may not clothe himself as he wish; may not love. . . . May not kiss without a blush of shame; may not profess his faith without ridicule; is this as God intended? And you wonder, with all your might, why you are accursed. Repent, before it is too late. The day of reckoning is at hand and you will fail. . . .”

Ogóne ceased abruptly, his hands down-cast, his eyes on the people. There was complete silence. Ogóne closed his eyes. The people were held speechless. His magnetism, exuded with such force during the whole time, had conquered. The chairman rose. He hurriedly closed the meeting. There was an apologetic atmosphere in the air. At the last words of the chairman the reaction set in. There was a cheer, clapping, hissing, shouting, more clapping. The Hall slowly emptied. Ogóne returned to Lord Alma's and sought refuge in his room. A note was brought in by the butler: “You were wonderful.—Lorna.” Ogóne waited till the butler had closed his bedroom door and then, flinging himself upon the bed, he wept. “O God, help me. Strengthen me, O Lord.”

Comfort came eventually, and Ogóne sat up on his bed and thought: Was he wrong? Was

his faith in himself weak? Was he an alarmist, a ranting fool? Perhaps after all the Poles would defeat Russia. Serbia would drive back the Turk and confine him to Constantinople. The Islamic revolts in Arabia would fail. France would hold on to Syria. England would go forth and meet the enemy at the doorway, and not wait for a fight in the back-parlour. Then all he had felt would prove wrong. He would have misjudged his duty. He would have to lose himself in journalism as before. He would have to write on music and painting with an occasional—a very occasional—unsigned article on foreign affairs. If this was to be, how he had wasted his life! And yet, no more than millions of others. . . . He thought of the days gone by; of his '*gymnase*' days in Moscow. Of the 1905 rebellion, and the Cossacks. Of the Japanese War when he was at Petersburg, and of the Great War when he was a soldier. Of Moscova, and Rustov, where he spent his summers. Of Tiflis after the Kerensky revolution. Of Paris after the War, and Athens. Of Constantinople—most beautiful of towns; of Capri, of Sofia, of Bucharest, of Vienna. And long ago he had been happy; and now it seemed so very long ago. . . . Nobody had faith in him. Well—he would see; he would wait.

It was about half-past five when he descended to the drawing-room. Tea had just been cleared

away, and his lordship's heir was alone, reading the paper.

"Have you had tea? Would you like some?" asked the young man.

"Thank you, no. . . . You were not at the meeting?"

"No, I'm afraid not. But the paper seems full of it. Here you are."

And he handed the paper to Ogóne.

"I don't wish to see. Did you read the account?"

"Yes. They call your speech rather extraordinary. They don't seem to agree with you."

"That would have been too much to expect."

"I must say," said the young man, "I agree that people are much too apathetic. Too kind-hearted. It always reminds me of Æsop and his husbandman and the snake, except that the English husbandman pats the snake on the head after he has been bitten, instead of seeing it doesn't do so again, you know. But you call that unnatural, don't you?"

"Which? To kill the snake?"

"No. To pet it and pat it on the head."

"Of course it's unnatural. Nature gave men instincts, but man seems to think better. Nevertheless, Nature will always win. The snake will bite again and man will die. And it really does nobody any good afterwards to be told he had done the right thing."

"Then you don't believe in loving your enemies and all that sort of thing?"

"As an ideal, certainly. As a condition for this world we are now in—it is impossible. The enemy will strike again. There has never been an idealist who carried his ideals into every action of his life. Even Christ, who preached 'Forgive thy enemies,' tells you that if your brother trespass against you and refuses to acknowledge it after three chances you are to treat him as 'an heathen man and a publican.' Thus the greatest of us cannot defy the ways of this world. For there, in that order to his disciples, I fail to find the love to all mankind. It is a contradiction, but it is true to life."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Lady Alma and her daughter. She advanced to Ogóne, holding out a letter.

"I thought we should find you here," she said. "This came by the evening post."

Ogóne took the letter and put it, unopened, into his pocket.

"And how did it go off? I've been so busy, I haven't had time to glance at a paper, even."

"I hope it will do some good, but I'm not an optimist."

"What about this theatre to-night, mother?" asked the daughter. "Is Mr. Bobrishev coming?"

"Yes," said her ladyship, turning to Ogóne. "Would you like to come, or would you prefer to stay? Rupert will not be going, as he hates parties."

It was obvious to Ogóne that Lady Alma could do well without this strange Russian *protégé* of her husband's.

"I will stay behind, if you do not mind, Lady Alma. I have an article to write."

"Just as you like. I will let Banister know." And she rang the bell and gave the necessary instructions to the butler, ordering dinner for two.

When Ogóne reached his bedroom prior to dressing for dinner, he opened his letter. It was from a certain Colonel, who requested him to be so good as to visit him in the Foreign Office on the following day, as he had something of interest to impart. He would be expected at eleven o'clock in the morning. Ogóne was surprised. Was this a result of to-day's speech? No; the letter could not have arrived in the time. Yet it was marked: "By messenger." Therefore Lady Alma had been wrong: it could not have come by the post.

That evening's dinner was dull enough. Ogóne had been talking of Verlaine and Rimbaud, and of Baudelaire and his mistress; but soon found that Mr. Rupert had not only never read a word of either, but had never even heard their names.

He then tried Shakespeare, and remarked that Richard the Second had more beautiful speeches to say than any other of the Great Bard's characters. Mr. Rupert thought Hamlet was very good, and also Macbeth. He had not read the others. But wait a minute—yes, he had read something about Cleopatra in a holiday task that had been set him at Eton. Ogóne tried music. Rupert loved Jazz and was an expert at the drum. Ogóne asked if Rupert had been interested in the campaigns of Marshal Macdonald. Oh yes, he had heard of Hector Macdonald in Egypt and South Africa. Ogóne felt he could not go on. He was wasting breath. The rest of the evening passed mostly in silence, whilst Rupert read the illustrated weeklies over and over again, making a few disjointed remarks about the lords and ladies he knew who were at Monte Carlo, or Deauville, or Timbuctoo. Ogóne re-read Tolstoy's *Voskresyenyie*.

The following morning Ogóne repaired to the Foreign Office. He filled in his voucher and was ushered immediately into a room. A young man came forward.

"The Colonel will be here directly," he said. "Will you sit down? My name is Tryton. I am his secretary."

Ogóne sat in the proffered seat and scanned the young man. He wore tortoise-rimmed spectacles, and was very smartly dressed. Ob-

viously of the Eton and Oxford type, but, behind it all, there was something. Ogóne was certain of that. He could feel a retrenched sympathy about Tryton; a soul unexpressed, subdued. Ogóne was interested.

"What is your Christian name?" asked Ogóne.

The young man smiled. "Strange question," he said.

"Is it? I'm sorry," smiled the Russian.

"David," was the reply.

Ogóne was surprised. They talked a little. Then Ogóne asked:

"And so you know Russia? That's good. You like it?"

"I was only in Georgia after the war. I don't know Russia."

The door opened and the Colonel came in. A strongly-built, bald-headed, clean-shaven small man, also horn-spectacled and with a wooden leg. Tryton went out. The Colonel sat down.

"Mr. Bobrishev," he proceeded, "we have heard you are an expert on the Near East. Would you care to do something for us? I want information from Aleppo." He turned, and looked Ogóne in the eyes. There was no reply. He continued: "The French are there now. There would be no difficulty in getting there; and when the French are driven out, you can stay.—Well?"

Ogóne smiled. "You English are very extraordinary."

"Why?" snapped the Colonel.

"Some years ago," continued Ogóne, "I brought you, at the risk of my life, information—accurate information—and you laughed at it, and it is now proved correct. And then you come and ask me again. Am I a fool? Shall I waste my time and life for you? If that is what you want, employ a machine to whom England matters much. I will not waste your time, and you shall not waste mine."

Ogóne sighed, and rose. The Colonel rang, and went on writing. Tryton entered.

"I'm sorry we aren't good enough for you to care to serve. Good-bye." And the Colonel continued writing.

"Do you think it worth while being laughed at twice?" asked Ogóne, as he turned to leave the room.

Tryton conducted him down the corridor, where they passed a multitude of young aristocrats, all horn-spectacled, with papers in their hands, running in and out of doors like harlequins chased by pantaloons. At the door, Tryton stopped.

"You will dine with me to-night, at the 'Queen's'?" he asked.

"At eight o'clock? Yes, I think I will." And Ogóne went down the steps, turned into

Downing Street, and made his way back to the house.

That evening at eight o'clock, Ogóne made his way to Sloane Square, entered the little restaurant, and was ushered into the inner room by an Italian. Ogóne immediately felt at home ; he saw Tryton sitting in the corner—and felt more so. His hat was taken from him, and he sat down facing his host. They looked at each other. Tryton no longer wore the spectacles. The silence was broken, when the menu was offered. They chose and ordered. The dishes came in rotation.

“ This is odd,” suggested Tryton.

“ That the rays of sympathy are not antagonistic ? That you feel you know me and I know you ? No, it is not odd. It is natural. But preach it in the market-place, and you are in jail. That, if you like, is odd. There are two types, and only two types. Those that know the glory of meeting in sympathy, and those that don't. We are the former and, happily, in the world, the majority. In England, the minority. Then, there is no country like England. It picks the world's brains, throws in a dash of Celt, and produces the article as British. Unrealized genius, *malchick* ; but, none the less, wonderful—yet wrong.”

“ How ? ”

“ Because it forgets the spirit. It is more

concerned with the brain and the body. They strive to leap outside the wheel of life, but as long as Nature binds her wheels with iron, they cannot. People will not realize that we have but from the axle to the rim in which to move. We can go up the spokes, down the spokes, and round the spokes, but the rim is there ; and it is thus ordained by God. We can be no better than the rim, no worse than the axle. Idealism acted is beyond the rim. Actual fact is within. Let us realize it, and the world goes on in peace. We can be no better than we are—in this world. In the next—well, of course, that is different.”

The young man was watching Ogóne’s hands in their rhythmic movement. He was liking the music of the voice.

“Do you sing ? ” he asked.

“I will sing to you one day ; but not to-night. Now, I feel only like singing ‘The Cossack’s Lament’—*O kriachi, kriachi !*”

“I should like you to sing to me. You write, of course, on music. Tell me, why do you call yourself ‘Ogóne’ ? ” inquired Tryton.

“That I will tell you one day. One day, soon. I am afraid of the world. But I shall not always be. Do you remember Milton saying : ‘O for that warning voice, which he, who saw the Apocalypse, heard cry in heaven’ ? Perhaps I am a warning voice. I don’t know yet : I may be.”

There was a pause.

"I heard you speak yesterday. Do you think the British Empire is finished, really?"

"I do. It is civilization's last present to the world: the handing over of an Empire to feebleness, anarchy and the dregs of humanity. And for that, they shall pay when the day comes, when the darkness comes. Short-sighted, blind, stumbling, asking the way of the village idiot. Are you surprised when the village idiot points to the abyss and says, 'That way'? And the village idiot is everywhere. The village idiot saw the first European War, which he had called impossible. He saw it continue for nearly five years when, had England been prepared, it would have lasted but two. And when that war was over, he slept again. He made treaties. He handed his colonies to Fate, and broke with his faithful ally, Japan. He sent his idealists, his Wilsons, to Washington and Geneva, and they spoke of Disarmament. The one Conference had an object—Japan. The other had not. They were trying to get out over the rim of the wheel. Fools, fools! But I don't care. They will learn, and die in the learning. Oh, hit the wall; hit it hard, and cry 'naughty wall!' but the wall will stand, and God alone can tell it to fall. The wall is fact. The wall is the nature of this world, neither better nor worse. But, why talk? It will come; and I, I am alone; born for one

object, like the rest of us ; but my object is the last—the last fire, the burning fire.”

His voice was low, only Tryton was listening. He felt Ogóne's personality, his enthusiasm, his great sorrow, his years of awaiting what he felt would be his duty. He was sorry for the man but, in his heart of hearts, he knew there was something in it all and, who knows ? perhaps he would prove right. He had frequently met people who aroused a sudden interest, but never one of such force—such subdued force. He had often had ideals of smaller personalities he had met, and how rarely had they come up to his expectations. There had always been a flaw, some infinitesimal characteristic that could not find the necessary harmonized outlet. In his work, he had daily intercourse with men of brains, but of the cart-rutted order, the squashed, bowed-to-circumstances order. There had been—there were—men in his Department who could have been great, but they had been beaten ; beaten by circumstance and convention. So many ‘might-have-beens.’ And had they been, even, could it have averted what Ogóne called ‘Destiny’ ? He felt now, after listening to Ogóne, that man could never be more nor less than what Fate had intended for him ; that strive as he can, it could only end in money, or temporal power ; and that withal, there was something wanting—a realization of existence,

and a reason for the same. Ogóne was watching him.

"Well?" Tryton asked.

"I think we shall dine together again," said Ogóne. "Anyhow, we shall meet. Would you care to go with me to listen to the shoutings in the Park to-morrow? It is Sunday. I will meet you at Hyde Park Corner at three. Will that do?"

"Right," said Tryton; and calling for their hats, they left together. At St. Peter's, with its wicked War Memorial, they parted.

The family had either gone to bed or were out when Ogóne returned to the Almas, for he saw nobody as he made his way to bed. The following morning he was up betimes, and found the family evincing great interest in the illustrated Sunday papers. It appeared that somebody or other had been divorced, and there was an unclaimed baby in the case. Whose was it? Lord Alma swore it was the co-respondent's. Lady Alma, that it was legitimate. The daughter thought it might be any one's, and Rupert facetiously suggested it was the butler's. Dear me; such an excitement there was! Into the middle of this walked Ogóne. There were good-mornings all round, and continued discussions as to the baby's father.

The morning passed as Sunday mornings do. Very dull, except for a religious discussion be-

tween Ogóne and his host. After lunch, Ogóne went out and walked towards Hyde Park Corner. By the Hospital he had to wait ; for, heading towards Piccadilly, was a long procession of men and women carrying Trade Union banners, red flags, blue flags, and placards on which was written, ' Stop the War,' ' Don't let the Capitalists send the Working Man to his Death,' ' We don't want another War.' Ogóne watched and smiled. When the procession had passed, he crossed the street and came upon Tryton, who was still watching the marching crowds. He turned as Ogóne touched his shoulder.

" Forgive them, Lord, they know not what they do," murmured Tryton.

" And if they did," replied Ogóne, " they'd do it again."

" Shall we follow them and listen ? I expect it's Trafalgar Square."

Ogóne agreed, and they followed the procession slowly.

" Do you know," said Ogóne at length, " that they'll go on doing this for months and months, even were the enemy at the gates of London. Then they'll fight like a thousand devils ; but it will be too late. Amazing people ; amazing. . . ."

" Things are coming to a head, I'm afraid," said Tryton. " Warsaw will fall to-day or to-morrow. When do you really think we shall realize ? "

Ogóne stopped and struck a match. He slowly exhaled a thin wisp of cigarette smoke. He coughed.

"The moment Russia touches Germany, Germany will revolt and the Reds will have the power. Then watch the Rhine."

"We fight there?" suggested Tryton.

"No. We shall withdraw at the will of the people and send Notes to the respective proletariat."

"I don't believe you."

"It is written," Ogóne said quietly.

They walked in silence, following the increasing crowd. Down past His Majesty's Theatre, past the Shipping Lines offices into the Square. The base of the column was surmounted by flags, men and women. The paved areas were packed. A man started to speak. He said that war clouds were everywhere, that the Government would be let in for another war, unless they protested. That there was no reason to fight. That Russia and Germany had always been good friends to the English proletariat. That they would proclaim a general strike, should the Government declare war. And so on, and so on. . . . Ogóne whispered to his companion: "That man never fought in the last war. He probably made money in it. Why is he so earnest?" There was no answer. Tryton was watching a little woman who had just begun to

speak. Oh, this woman was wonderful. She wanted to know why their Labour Government had not smashed the whole Capitalist system and made war impossible. Why they did not follow Russia's example. It was all so earnest and so contradictory, so cheap, and so dear to the hearts of her listeners. Her hair even became excited, her hands waved and her voice squeaked; but she was a Leader and she loved the job. Had not the women of England had enough war? Had they not suffered enough?

Other speakers followed, and they were artists. They played on the people's overstrung nerves. They suggested marching to Downing Street at once, and seeing the Prime Minister. Ogóne became more and more despondent. It annoyed him. He thought of France and what she had suffered, and of England and what she had not. It was incredible. He would like to have heard some ex-soldiers speak—not conscripts or orderly-room clerks, but fighting soldiers—first-line troops. Their views would have been interesting. He thought how easy it was to get up and talk nonsense. He thought of Nelson, and the irony of it all; and he thought what it would be like were a bomb to fall on the column and the whole edifice fall amongst the people. Then it began to rain. The speakers succeeded each other and the crowd began to mumble. Would they follow the speaker to Downing Street and stop this

warring by making the Prime Minister write to the foreign Trades Unions? "Yes, yes!" they cried. "Come on, then!" shouted the little fanatic, and he pushed his way into the crowd.

In a minute, he was hoisted on to brawny shoulders and hustled through the crowd. The mass followed him towards the Horse Guards. Meanwhile, had any one been noticing, mounted police and ordinary police had drawn a cordon from Whitehall Court through the Horse Guards to the Ministry of Public Works. A beautiful curve of dark-blue manhood. The crowd saw this and was indignant. A Labour Government in power, and force about to be used—tut, tut!

Ogóne, who had remained by the column, turned to Tryton.

"Quand le pouvoir est entre les mains du camarade Démos, la force est Dieu," he said.

A mounted officer rode forward and told the crowd it would not be allowed to go further and had better disperse. The crowd came on. An order was given—policemen drew their truncheons. The mounted men who were behind moved up. In a second, it had begun. Blows fell right and left—the horses moved forward and gradually the fast-thinning crowd was pushed back and back. At the Square they broke and fled and the thing was over.

Ogóne and Tryton walked up Regent Street.

"I hate to see that," said the Russian.

“Eventually the people must win, though.”

“No,” said Ogóne, “God will.”

They walked down into Bond Street and had tea at a club near by. Ogóne decided to return to Durham next day. He wanted quiet and time to think. To-day’s events had sickened him.

Tryton asked, as they walked to Alma House, what he meant when he had said “God will win.”

Ogóne replied: “The Capitalist rules because Nature so ordains. The people will rule whenever unnatural events take place, but his rule will be of despair and sorrow even as the Capitalist’s has been of wealth and sorrow. The people think they are the evangelists of a new era of peace and love; but they are not. God is that, and He only. When He changes this world He will do it Himself—He needs neither top-hats nor corduroy trousers. We are all the same in His eyes. They will see that one day.”

“In our lifetime?” suggested Tryton.

“In our lifetime,” said Ogóne.

He told Tryton of his decision, and the latter promised to write should further news come through.

When Ogóne acquainted Lady Alma with his decision, she proceeded to gush, and made the usual conventional entreaties to stay with the usual conventional sweetness.

The following morning, Ogóne left for Durham,

and it would be hard to say who was the most relieved. Only Lord Alma still predicted a future for the clever, sad young man.

In the third-class carriage, Ogóne had three companions: a poorly dressed young man with a pale face and one arm, a middle-aged farmer with a red face, and a woman with a fur coat. He watched them over the top of his paper. When Ogóne had finished, he handed the paper to the pale man opposite and leaned back smoking his cigarette, watching the changing landscape, and the telegraph wires rising and falling. He watched the cows, and some children waving, the hideous advertisement hoardings and the lazy little streams.

"I see the Government is a-goin' to knock down the pensions again," the man said to Ogóne.

"Yes," replied the Russian. "When the soldier is sufficiently back in the rut and swamped by the men who did nothing, it will be so difficult for him to protest; that's why."

The man smiled grimly. "They do say as there's goin' to be another war. Well, them parliamentaries can go the next time, for they don't get none of us."

Ogóne nodded his head sympathetically. The man went on:

"Remember all the shouting and the 'what we're a-goin' to do for the boys when they've

come home'? We was fools. We believed 'em. And what did they do? Employed conchies in Government offices, kicked us into the streets and then said: 'Now then, forget all about the war. You're expectin' too much. Come on, 'elp me make some more money for meself!' Forget, indeed! And me as lost this 'ere arm in the Somme. It don't 'arf make yer sick. Next war I'm a-goin' to wear green bands and do a bit of recruitin' and rout out some of those bloody old fools and them young fellahs as turned a lathe or summut and then went on strike 'cos it were too 'ard for 'em."

Here the woman interposed: "Yes, and me as lost two sons and the one as is left and comes back 'ome finds 'is job took by a younger man as never did nothin' durin' the war but plead hex-emption as a one-man business; leastways said it were, tho' 'e 'ad 'is sister a-mindin' of the shop when 'e were out a-courtin' all right, yer may be sure!"

"Ah!" said the ex-soldier. "They'll be a-prayin' of us again to go and save their bloody skins and a-promisin' of us this and a-promisin' of us that and a-callin' of us 'eroes. But no. There's lots as'll see 'em somewhere fust afore they gets took in a second time. What regiment was you with, sir?" and he turned to the farmer.

"Ah, they wouldn't 'ave me," he said.

"Why not?"

"I was too valuable they says, a-makin' of the country's food."

"You had sons go, no doubt?" inquired Ogóne.

"No. I only 'ad three, bless yer, and then it were all we could do to run the farm, what with the labourers a-goin'."

The train stopped and the ex-soldier rose.

"Well," he said, turning to the farmer, "yer can tell them sons of yourn as I'll be after 'em for the next war and then p'raps you'll be glad to 'ave some of them labourers you sent to the war come and 'elp you make another pile." And the ex-soldier left the train and walked towards the barrier. The train went on.

"Them young fellows thinks too much on theirselves," said the farmer to Ogóne.

"I don't think so," he replied. "It is something to have saved the farmers and the rest of the country from misery, slavery and probably death."

The farmer grunted. "Was you a soldier then?" he asked.

"I was," answered Ogóne.

The farmer remained silent. The woman continued talking to the Russian and blaming the Government.

"I don't think you should lay that at the doors of this Government," said Ogóne. "It is the 1918 Government who was responsible. The

Labour Party hadn't the chance. Their mistake remains to be proved."

Some hours later, the train drew up at Durham ; and on descending, Ogóne was greeted by Lorna. They seated themselves in the dog-cart and were soon rolling along towards the house. Very little did they speak. Only Ogóne remarked he was glad to be back again. The Reverend Septimus welcomed them on the doorstep, and all three sat round the fire and drank their tea—Russian fashion, milkless and in glasses with much sugar.

"I heard about it from Lorna. She was there. She said the people did not understand," stated the clergyman.

"I know," said Ogóne. "They are not ready yet. I find London much the same as ever ; crowds round the betting tape and nobody interested about Warsaw."

"Have you seen the evening paper ? " asked Lorna.

"No."

"It has fallen. I read it at the station. I thought you knew."

"In two days," said Ogóne, gazing into the fire, "they will be in Germany. In three days, there will be a revolution there, and then it is the beginning of the end."

There was silence. The clergyman spoke.

"How then is Megiddo to be the scene of the

last battle, stuck away in Syria? The Turks must have passed the Plain by now. Do you think there can be a Megiddo anywhere else?"

"No. It will probably be there. The French may advance. It is interesting. . . ." There was a sudden clap of thunder, the lightning rent the sky and the rain began to pour down, hissing and spluttering. It was all so sudden.

"Well, I never!" said the Reverend Septimus, after a pause. "Very unusual for this time of year. Listen to it. Who would have thought it!"

And as suddenly as it had begun, so it left off. The sun shone forth and smiled. Ogóné lit a cigarette. He turned to the fire again.

"Supposing if that were the last of the rain? Supposing if the drought is to begin? Supposing if the Euphrates were to dry up?—It would all be in accordance. Perhaps it will."

The old clergyman rose. "You might have brought the paper with you, Lorna," he said reproachfully.

"I only looked at it for a minute on the stall, and then the train came in. I'm sorry. What do you see in the fire, Shura; anything?"

Ogóné shook his head.

"I am not a seer: I sometimes wish I were. But I like the fire. Do you mind?"

He turned and smiled. She laughed. The

clergyman left the room, the Bible under his arm.

"Father's worrying already about next Sunday's sermon."

There was a pause. Lorna looked nervous.

"Thank you," she said at length, "for your speech. I shall never be able to tell you what it meant to me. Perhaps I don't quite know myself. There are times when—oh, I don't know. . . ."

"Go on."

"I can't explain. I—I loved it. That's all."

"Lorna, I never knew you took such an interest in my efforts," said Ogóne quietly, laying his hand on the girl's.

"Perhaps," she answered, "I take too much interest in you or your 'efforts' as you call them."

"You are about the only person I know who has faith in me. That's something."

"I'm glad. Does it worry you if people scoff?" Lorna asked.

"No. I have faith. That is the only thing that is kind to me." He turned to the window, and rose. "Look," he said, "there is a glad rainbow in the sky."

"Is it so very glad?"

"Temporary success has made the sun 'sound' his rainbow as one would a trumpet. He is glad, anyhow."

Lorna smiled.

"Perhaps, after all," said Ogóne, "it would be a happier thing for me if I looked upon the world like the Gioconda, with an enigmatic smile."

The sun disappeared behind trees.

SO Warsaw fell, and Poland, struggling and gasping, broke . . . and one more little country paid the price of independence. Her army retired westwards. Isolated bands held out here and there, dying in the knowledge that, while they had lately lived, their country had been free, and slavery was to come but after their death. By this time, as we have seen, France was fully mobilized and hurrying forces now to the Rhine, now to Syria, and expecting her ally to do the same. . . .

It was during this session that the Government had begun to organize their campaign of Land Nationalization, and the House of Commons was very much intrigued. The Bill had passed its first reading: and how the landlords shouted! The Bill had passed its second reading and its third: was sent to the Upper House, hesitated, but finally became law. The curse of landlordism was thus finally abolished in England, and the new era of freedom was launched. New Government Offices were taken up, new officials appointed, hundreds of clerks engaged, and off they went.

All land belonged to the Government ; no land was to be reserved for private pleasure. If a man wanted land he could have it, provided he lived on the spot. Applications for holdings poured in, and the Minister of Agriculture smoked a long cigar in the House of Commons smoking-room, and drank a pint of Guinness full of satisfaction. When this had been going some time, mines and railways were to follow suit. An Opposition Member asked the Prime Minister when he was going to nationalize Heaven, and applied for a bit of cloud on the spot. Land-owners' Protection Societies sprang up all over the country ; but they all disagreed, and nothing was done. Worried landlords who, for years past had drawn rent for doing nothing, rushed down to the country and pretended their land was all they lived for, and their tenants their best friends. There was great consternation. The dear Duchess thought the Government positively wicked. The fox-hunting Squire swore worse than usual. The landed farmer wrote to his M.P. English Conservatism burst forth in all its forms. Advanced Radicals, who farmed a few acres, became confirmed Tories, whilst two or three Red Socialists turned blue on the spot. Even the Patriotic Union, led by our friend Mr. Middleman, forgot all about the foreign situation and turned Patriotism into Individual Protectionism. As for the Scottish landlords with their

moors turned into potato patches, nothing could keep them under control. They wanted to fight, to raise the clans, to wave the flaming torch, proclaim their individual independence . . . anything rather than lose their deer, or their grouse, or their 'purrple heatherr.'

The countryside was gradually becoming more of a 'Jig-saw puzzle' than usual: cabbages lived in the next field to pigs, and the fence was not strong enough; cattle had glorious meals in apple orchards; ponds were drained dry to grow carrots. Half the townsfolk became farmers, and farmed as they had seen it done when careering down the country roads in charabancs of a Saturday afternoon.

In the midst of this, the papers reported that the Russian troops had reached the German frontier and simultaneously Germany had gone mad, and was in a state of revolution. The English Press, that for years had always hailed revolutions abroad as the finest thing for a nation, burst forth against the late German Government, and hoped dear Germany would now be freer. There seemed to be no idea how free a nation could eventually become, but 'freer' is always a good comparative for the first days of a revolution.

The Reparations business had long ceased to be a matter of interest. Germany had refused to pay, and there it was. France, alone, had

been receiving a few gold marks, dragged from Germany at the point of the bayonet.

So Germany was in a state of revolution. Well, very good. She might restore the Monarchy. Um. . . . Have a stronger Cabinet? Good. Or become a Socialistic State. Not at all. She did none of these. Russia had seen to that: for all of a sudden, from Berlin to Bavaria, Silesia to Essen, there arose fanatical, sallow-faced soviets; and then the plot was visible. Workmen and peasants, iron-smelters and labourers, the preliminary nucleus for Bolshevism, rushed about, nationalized, robbed, pillaged, shrieked; living their day till the second stage should come, when the *bourgeoisie* was to take control under the name of the Kommissar of This and the Kommissar of That. And every man was to call his neighbour '*Kamerad*'; whilst the poor peasant called his former master '*Herr Kamerad*,' and thought it all a fine game—as indeed it was. Free love, free vice, free food, free clothes, no work, much talk! There is a lot to be said for a Communist State. . . .

The German Army exchanged its banners for red ones on which was written: D.S.F.S.R., in gold. Lieutenant-Colonels became '*Bataillon-kommandanten*,' and each had his *Kommissar*. Epaulets were torn off. "Please, comrade, would you mind doing guard over the coal dump for your ten minutes now?" Thus does the sergeant-

major address the private. "Ten minutes!" shrieks the private, "Comrade, this is scandalous; I want to go out. Give me the permission." The Kommissar is interviewed on the subject. "The Comrade Schultz shall have his permission. He must do his ten minutes afterwards," says the Kommissar. But all this is only the first months of Bolshevism. Later on, Comrade Schultz will be shot on the spot, for daring to question an order. And this comes after three months of flattery!

Russian Kommissars poured into Germany. German Kommissars, trained in Russia, rushed back to their delivered land. All the Jews in Germany danced the Jerusalem jig in the Unter den Linden, put their fingers to their noses and winked. The Hebrew was ruling. His day had come. And, clutching his greasy coat-tails, he clambered to the seats of Justice, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Treasury, Agriculture, War—everywhere! The Mark of the Beast was everywhere, and the people worshipped the Beast and he spoke great blasphemies. But it was glorious, this wave of brotherhood. Two hundred men were shot outside the Reichstagsgebäude. Thousands were arrested. All this in the name of Socialism, the Brotherhood of Man. But it was ordained: for was not the Beast to rule over the corners of the earth, till the coming of the Lamb? And the goods of the rich were requisitioned, and the

goods of the poor also, and what was gathered was dispatched to feed and clothe the grumbling Russian millions. It had been done before in Siberia and the Ukraine, in Bokhara and Turkestan, in Armenia and Azerbaijan, in Georgia and Dagestan.

Two men in a '*Jäger*' battalion were bayoneted for refusing to shoot their officers. The Synagogues were crowded: the churches were closed. Meetings were held all day long. "Long live Soviet Germany!" The same old clap-trap; so well known in Russia. The promises that were made. The decision to make Poland a Soviet Independent Republic. Wretched Poles, ruled by Russians again, with a battalion of Red troops in every village. So old; so old. Why, bless me, the trick had been working since 1917, and nobody had dared to see through it yet!

Baby-crèches were opened for nationalized children, and the birth-rate went up by leaps and bounds, or rather, was apparently prepared to go up. Lucky children, nourished by Nurse State to carry forward the doctrine of Idealism and Communism to the four corners of the earth; tied neither by home affections nor knowledge of mother's love, and spared the stern, parental frown. "There is no God, and only one prophet, and he is Marx and we are his disciples." Thus cried the Sovietized priests, and the others were put away: for the Beast had power to slay as

many as did not worship the Mark of the Beast. The crossed hammer and sickle: the former without an anvil, the latter without wheat. Should any one despair over conditions, he was told this was the prelude to the Ideal World. Should he remark the prelude was a bit long, he was shot; and they had no more trouble from him. The Kommissars and Bureaucrats had plenty of food, and so had the soldiers. The rest had—well, a piece of black bread and a bowl of soup. All food was nationalized, and it took six sheets of foolscap to apply for an onion. Thus it was, and thus it was ordained. The Red Banner rose on high, and the people worshipped the Beast and clapped the five-pointed Star to their foreheads, and the silver and red enamel Order to their left breasts.

Moscow spoke, and Berlin bowed: Moscow laughed, and Berlin smiled: Moscow plotted, and Berlin planned. The brands were being gathered for the burning. The decrees of Fate, unknowingly, were being executed. All men were to be in their houses by ten, and no one was allowed outside till the morning. The theatres were taken over, and propaganda plays and cinema performances alone were permitted. Wonderful plays these were: the hero, white-faced and poor, was first seen being beaten with a cat-o'-nine-tails by a top-hatted *bourgeois*. He swears revenge. He insults his master. He is turned

into the street. Next act: behold an assembly of the proletariat, plotting the overthrow of Capitalism. The orchestra plays the '*Internationale*' with muted strings, and the audience rises. (Rather disconcerting for the actors but none the less necessary.) And the next scene: the Revolution, and the imprisonment of the *bourgeoisie*. The audience cries its approval; but the moral is not yet, for the last act is yet to come. This shows the hero, clothed in his Sunday-best, sparing the life of his former master and oppressor. Oh, beautiful thought—'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.' The applause is prolonged; the hero is "*hoch-ed*"; the villain, lately spared, is hooted till the roof rings. . . . In the prison, seventy-five *bourgeois* were being done to death at that very moment . . . and with axes. The cinemas showed the glories of a Red soldier's life: the beautiful uniform, the excellent food, the glorious Flag of Liberty; Abraham Trotzky—Leon Bronstein (now hailed as a German and worshipped as such); Zinoviev, Litvinov, brothers all. Shade of Judas Iscariot! how outshone was he!

The vanities of the world were vanishing. Faded was the pomp of yesterday, yet the red morning brought no joy, only fear and tribulation. Disaster hung in the air. The Reign of Terror had begun.

In the day, huddled forms sped through the street, fearful lest they be entrapped in the nets

of prophecy and doom. And in the morning, those huddled forms were pitched one after the other into the hastily dug graves, and the Beast licked his lips and asked for more, and more, and yet more. Spasmodic revolts broke out in the villages, and Communist discipline was meted out to the perpetrators. For the people must rule, and the bastard child of Demos held the sword. Yet the whole childishness of it all thrilled and thrilled again those caught up in the hypocritical promises of the saviours of mankind. The doctrine was like a disease—a venereal disease that was not to become apparent till the end of all time: till the coming of God. Man, in his ignorance, dissatisfied with Nature's commands, was setting out to create a state, based on unnatural law and denial of fact. Let him create it: it matters not; its present joy shall give way to eternal sorrow. But live for the present and all is well. Want love: and it was there for the asking; the permission signed and the bayonet to enforce. Want gold and jewels: then steal; but watch that a comrade be not jealous. Want food and wine: then go into the villages and take. Want power: then kill and condemn. Be young; it is the reign of youth. Be gay; for you can but die. And old women and children cursed their saviours in order to die; such was their misery. For suicide there was no need: one word against the doctrine or

the Mark of the Beast and you cannot even choose the weapon—though a bayonet is quickest. Remnants of the Second International, pioneers of humanitarianism and real Socialism, your offspring is diseased, foul, and abortive; but he has power, and can use the weapons of Capitalism and Imperialism better than any Nicolai. Fifty-two of your brothers fell in the first week, but they were an hundredth part of those gone before and those to come!

Then came the military preparations. Battalions and brigades poured over the frontier. Arms and ammunition rose up from their hiding-places all over Germany. Great guns, forged during the German Conference of years before, came on in armoured trains. The whole country was alive, and with Teutonic organization and Slav millions the army was ordered, divided, arranged and ready. Universal Service was decreed. Officers and men rejoined, horses and food were requisitioned, and the bolshevizing of Europe was to begin, by force—which is the surest method, because it was the ace so long held by Capitalistic Governments. “Comrades, to arms! The groaning proletariat of France and England are calling for us! Can we shut our ears to that cry? Never! Onward, to bring relief to oppressed millions. Down with the Capitalists! Death to the *Bourgeoisie*! Kill! Slay! The People demand it. The People need

it. Into France! The People demand it. The People need it. Over the Rhine! Nothing can stop us! The People are awake. Moscow is with you. Long live Soviet Russia! Long live Soviet Germany! Long live the Third Internationale!" This poster hurled defiance over all Germany, and the old hatreds were fanned to flame. . . .

But they lived for the present. A large, purely Russian force was sent south to watch Roumania and Czecho-Slovakia, and with these frowning eyebrows above them the two countries were afraid. But as to the rest—the new German Red Armies marched westwards, flags flying and drums beating, and people threw roses in their path and gave them "*dunkles Münchenes Bier*" and coffee, and brown loaves: for were not the troops about to revenge the deaths of the million Germans who had been slain by the traitorous English? '*Feldgrau Uniform*' and '*Püppchen*' once more mingled their strains, and over and above it all boomed the '*Internationale*,' the '*Marseillaise*' and the '*Carmagnole*,' the last two borrowed since 1917 from their French enemies by the great Russian Proletariat. And thus to the Rhine. . . .

At the bridge-heads a halt was called, and polite Notes were sent to Strasbourg, Cologne and Emmerich; all as follows:

"The United Proletariat of Soviet Russia and

Soviet Germany demand, in the name of the International Proletariat, the right to bring help to the oppressed Western German population." (Clever creatures, not a word about France.) "If the permission be not granted within forty-eight hours, we shall advance."

Within an hour, both Belgium and France had replied that any advance would be met with all the force at their command. The English reply was waited for. London was taken by surprise. The Cabinet met. "What on earth does this mean?" said one Minister to another. "What's Russia got to do with it, anyway?" said the other Minister to the one. "Germany is a proper Socialist State. She can't possibly be so Imperialistic," said yet another Minister. "I don't believe it. It's a Capitalist plot," suggested the Minister of Labour, and thought he had sealed the matter. It had always been such an effective thing to say in the past! Twenty-four hours fled, and the Cabinet was still amazed. They decided to call a meeting of the Heads of the Trade Union movement and the Communist Party, for that evening; then they would see. They would consult the nation. The War Office, however, thought differently and wired to the G.O.C.: "Stick tight at all costs." The Minister of War winked at this order and said never a word.

So the meeting was held and the Prime Minister

asked advice. The one delegate jumped up and said: "We should send a Note to the Germans and tell them to go back." Another said: "We should withdraw at once." It was explained that that procedure would make a gap and leave France and Belgium stranded. "That don't matter," was the reply. A third remarked that the only war he approved of was against Capitalism; and that, as Germany was a Socialist State, they could not go to war. A fourth did not believe it. A fifth said it was a French plot. A sixth did not think it was French: he thought it Belgian. "Or German," interjected a humorist. A seventh was fool enough to suggest we should fight at once and throw all our forces into the fray, or it would be too late. "What?" shrieked the others. "Fight? We've fought enough!" An eighth said, if any one in England started to interfere with Germany or Russia, he would call a strike of his Union at once. "Oh, dear, that would never do!" thought the Prime Minister. What was to be done? Anyway, at length it was decided to send a protest Note to Germany; and there the Prime Minister thought it had better be left to the Cabinet, and so the meeting closed. The Cabinet was held at the thirty-fifth hour. Secretaries ran about, pens scratched, paper was torn up, a Minister or two went to Buckingham Palace and came back, and there was a regular fight for the waste-paper

basket. At the fortieth hour, the screed was drawn up and the Ministers were well satisfied.

“ His Majesty’s Government acknowledges the receipt of a letter from the German Soviet Republic which asked for permission to advance over the Rhine. They see no reason for such a sudden request, and have had no time to consult the French and Belgian Governments on the subject. They suggest that a place be decided on where representatives of the nations concerned may meet and discover a peaceable solution to the present situation. His Majesty’s Government suggest either Wapping or Cologne and would be pleased to receive your reply as early as possible. In the meantime His Majesty’s Government expect that no hostile advance be made against the troops of the Government at present round Cologne.” This message reached the Germans two hours after the artillery had opened fire from both banks of the Rhine.

Within a few hours the Secretary for War informed the Prime Minister that the British troops were being shelled and were replying. This caused the greatest concern in Ministerial circles and it was decided to withdraw the troops ten miles to prevent trouble whilst awaiting Germany’s reply. Orders were accordingly sent, and signed by the Prime Minister, for the Secretary for War had refused. The latter thereupon offered his resignation, which was immediately

accepted, and the post became vacant. When the British General showed his instructions to the French and Belgian commanders, fury was mixed with amazement, and the Military Commander of this outpost of the once famous British Empire hung his head for shame.

"*Alors, l'Angleterre nous quitte,*" sighed the Frenchman.

"*Non, non,*" protested the Englishman, "*rien que pour le moment.*"

"*Pardi!*" sighed the Belgian.

The English General begged and implored his allies to forgive him: that he, who had shed his own blood in the last war with so many French and Belgians might be spared their reproaches. But he urged that it was only a temporary retirement till the German reply should arrive, and that then he would lead his men forward to die alongside their old comrades-in-arms. And so the English withdrew their brigade-and-a-half, and the French took over their line. Amid the smiles and jeers of the German population and the clapping of hands and "*Auf Wiedersehen*"s of the "*Fräulein*"s the British marched back; but the General forbade the bands to play: he was ashamed. . . .

For a whole day after the receipt of the English protest, the Germans hurled shell after shell upon the enemy, and battalion after battalion moved westward to their support. Jeers were hurled

against the English, and the soldiers, ten to fifteen miles from the line smiled in a sickly way and said "Par bong," or "Nix goot," and were sorry. In the Emmerich region it soon became apparent that there was a larger concentration of Russo-German troops than in other places, and the French sent two divisions as support.

The British Cabinet met to discuss offers of help that had come from the Colonies. It was certainly very kind of them, thought the Prime Minister, but, as he was certain the Germans would not fight and that the Russians would go home, he wired his thanks and stated that he did not consider he would need their help. And meanwhile the English Press (or 90 per cent. of it), preached 'No War,' threatened general strikes, praised the Germans and hailed the Russians. The papers were loyal to the Government, and the people did not really bother much so long as they had their fox-hunting or footballing, boxing or polo, their dances and tennis; besides, there was always the British Navy, and the Germans and Russians had only got a few old ships.

There were ten British casualties from gas that day, for the men had no gas masks since the Washington Conference of some years before had forbidden it.

Ten mothers and wives wept: but theirs was the sacrifice for European Peace—at least, that is what the papers were to say, next morning.

A whole day had now passed, and the following morning brought the German reply. A new Secretary for War had been appointed, a little Idealist, previously of militarily non-aggressive type, with a *penchant* for civilian strife.

The Note was read out by the Prime Minister as follows :

“ The German Sovietic Federative Socialistic Republic, filled with the desire to bring help to the oppressed German western proletariat, have no faith in Conferences, and will continue their victorious advance till their aims be realized. They are certain that the *bourgeois* Government of Great Britain will listen to the will of their masses and refrain from striking against the International Red Proletariat.”

“ Bour-joy,” shrieked the Minister of Labour, “ d’ye hear that, Fred ? Me a bour-joy—a bour-joy ! ” “ Well, I never ! ” said the Board of Trade. “ Bour-joy, indeed ! I’ll give ’em bour-joy ! ” cried the new Secretary for War. “ Well, that ’as torn it,” the Minister of Education quietly remarked. He was the accepted wit, so the others laughed. “ Well, what hever are we a-goin’ to do now ? ” asked the Colonial Secretary. Yes, and there was the rub. . . . “ One thing is certain,” said the Prime Minister, “ we must not have war.”

“ That’s a pity,” murmured the new Secretary for War.

“ I propose as we sends a letter to France and the Belgiums and tells 'em not to fight. Then, no doubt, as our other comrades'll stop the war.” This from the Board of Trade.

“ Optimist ! ” smiled the Admiralty.

“ 'Ere, I wasn't a-talkin' to you, neither.”

The Admiralty continued to smile.

“ If yer wants a war, ye're welcome to go ! ”

“ I shall, if we don't support our allies.”

“ Ho, will yer ? ”

“ Gentlemen, gentlemen ! ” said the Prime Minister, and at this call to their better natures, the wrangling ceased. The Prime Minister then spoke.

“ It seems as if war is inevitable, but I see no reason for us to be in it. We shall have to have a Conference of our allies soon, and then decide. In the meanwhile, in order to somewhat arrest this advance, what do you say to asking some of those Balkan States to have a show and attack Germany ? There's Czecho-Slovakia and Roumania, Greece and Jugo-Slavia——”

“ I've 'ad enough of Greece,” interrupted a Minister.

“ Well, what do you say ? ” continued the Prime Minister. “ They could cause some trouble, and Roumania could keep Russia a bit quiet.”

“ No war with Russia ! I won't 'ave it ! ” said the Board of Trade.

"Who are you, anyway?" asked the War Office.

"I've been in this show longer than wot you 'ave, so shut yer mouth."

"Whose mouth?"

"Yours!"

"Hoh, mine?"

"Yus, yours!"

"Ho . . ."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" interrupted the Prime Minister.

Anyway, at the end of all this, it was decided to have some fun in the Balkans, ask the French and Belgians to meet in London, withdraw the Rhine Army another ten miles, and await results.

The Prime Minister invited the Ambassadors of Czecho-Slovakia and all the Balkan countries except Albania and Bulgaria to meet together. The Balkans referred the matter to their respective Governments and, except for Roumania, the Governments preferred to fight now rather than later. England guaranteed a supply of munitions. The sarcasm of the French Press knew no bounds. The *Entente Cordiale* was strained to breaking-point, and the Englishman abroad—ever despised since 1919—was treated as a leper.

On the Cologne-Strassbourg front, the enemy had not crossed the river as yet; but by Emmerich, the Franco-Belgian forces were falling slowly back. The French and Belgian Ambassa-

dors were quite rude at the Foreign Office ; but the English promised it should all be discussed at the forthcoming Conference. In the meantime, Czecho-Slovakia and Serbia started in, and the Russians, as if prepared, walked into Roumania. Roumania engaged, and Serbia swung eastwards to her support. Bulgaria and Turkey, in Thrace, attacked Greece, who was not quite certain whether she would not like to try for Smyrna again, and was consequently ill-prepared. However, events decided her, and she marched north-east-by-east. The English Press was well satisfied : they had ' honourably ' kept out of war so far, and all was going well. The Labour, or Governmental Press thought it a pity to exasperate Germany and Russia by this affair in the Balkans. The Transport Union declared a strike and refused to supply the Balkans with ammunition to fight their Russian and German brothers.

The Government immediately did an extraordinary thing. They ordered the military to run the transport, and it was done. Good gracious, what a thing to do ! Up jumped everybody who had ever jumped up before, and wanted to know since when honest people were to be bullied, and not have their strikes when they wanted them ! Such a shindy there was, and tubs were thumped all over the country. The madness had come upon them ; the voice of the Beast was beginning

to be heard in England. Then came an outcry for a General Election, and people clamoured for war, and the support of France and Belgium. Mass Meetings were held. Fights took place in London between those for war and those against ; and those against fought hardest.

The Prime Minister was cartooned sitting on a powder-barrel and surrounded by rows of shells to which he was applying fuses and a match. All people were awaiting the coming Conference which should finally decide for war or peace. And meanwhile, France and Belgium were shedding their blood, and the Balkans were shedding theirs ; keeping the gate to prevent disturbing the sleep of England. Red Cross Societies sprang up again and money was sent to France and ambulances equipped, whilst men went forth voluntarily to man the motors. The Labour Press considered this a breach of neutrality and urged the Government to prohibit such goings on. People cried for the immediate summoning of Parliament. Chaos, own valet to Demos, was looking through his master's wardrobe. Then the farmers cried out for want of rain, and prophesied a great shortage of food, and some people became apprehensive.

The churches were emptier than usual, but the Roman religion clutched and gathered, giving comfort to the weak, whose faith could not exist without a painted effigy, a candle or two,

and a nauseating smell of incense. They trooped to their confession and were absolved; they went forth and sinned and were absolved again, and their hearts were eased so that they could go and sin even once more. Many of the Anglican churches introduced Popish trappings and only stopped short of going right over, when it came to the Latin Service: but in all other forms these churches were becoming similar. Powerless Bishops could only worry; there was no ecclesiastical law applicable. It was becoming apparent that Faith was in a decrepit state, that God was being veiled by the priesthood, praised by an organ, eaten as a wafer, illuminated by tallow and string, appealed to by a bell, and worshipped through a gaudy statue of Mary with fair hair, blue eyes, and—a straight nose, lest the fact that she was a Jewess cause a revulsion of feeling among the faithful.

In America, things were going very nicely. Silas P. Honck, of Cincinnati, Ohio: typical of his breed; born a German and naturalized an American, suddenly became an Irishman whenever the Irish question was spoken of. Birmingham P. Bellows still spent his holidays at the Strand Palace Hotel and informed everybody how he as a Y.M.C.A. worker, or his son as a marine, or his uncle as a Knight of Columbus had won the last war and how grateful the British and French were to be taught how to carry it on.

Nasher B. Greery, ignorant of the meaning of his initials, started a new railway from Pilot Park to Pyramid Lake, had twenty-one strikes during the construction, but finished up well and was convinced he was worthy of a free ticket on the Heavenly Express when his time came. Two hundred women in tights went over to Uganda to suggest their method of dress to the native women. A hundred and twenty-one statues of Lincoln, Washington, Wilson, Dempsey, Jack Johnson, Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin and Ella Wheeler Wilcox were offered to England and accepted, whilst in exchange were sent back several artistic busts of Bottomley, Cornwallis, Bernard Shaw, Mrs. Asquith, and de Valera—the last two by Epstein.

Ambassador Quentin Durward Robb at this time published an interesting series of letters addressed to Head Janitor Franklin Avalon Winchester, of the State Department, full of information regarding the activities of the new Andoran Government, with a treatise on smuggling and hints for the thirsty. America was still as dry as one could be with a porous mackintosh and no shoes in a hailstorm.

English sovereignty in Africa was cloaked by missionary teaching and drew its fortune from the sweat of the native, in spite of continual protests from America where some buck nigger prattled away about a Universal Black Republic

wherein no one was to work, but every one be trained as a boxer—the height of negro ambition. Australia from Potts Point to Dampier Land grumbled and swore and had elections once a year in a vain endeavour to bring wealth to arid plains and salt bush. New Zealand, prim and proper, went slowly and humbly ahead, little England of the Southern Seas, blessed in contentment and bearing no malice. But then, this is only by the way; and the day of the Franco-Belgo-Anglo Conference was at hand. The passion for meetings, for Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice and Mr. Secretary was to have another outlet—an International one; and the British Government felt so important.

Well, in London, on this fine day, the members assembled. The French bowed, the Belgians bowed, and the British smirked, held out hands, took them away again and sat down abruptly. Interpreters ranged themselves behind their Governments, secretaries inspected and shook their fountain pens.

The Prime Minister rose and bade the foreigners welcome, deplored the reasons for the Conference, explained that the situation was incomprehensible and that Internationalism was not yet awake.

The Belgian Premier, senior Minister, rose to reply. He said Internationalism was a farce, and impossible—he had spent twenty-five years in the Congo, and knew. He said the situation

was quite obvious and natural, and begged that England would throw her whole strength into the breach, as he was certain the north front could not hold indefinitely against increasing hordes of Barbarians.

The French Premier, grave and sad, foresaw disaster. Syria would shortly be lost, and France would be over-run, if England did not help. Why wouldn't she? Did not she see that her turn would come after? Did she wish to break the Entente? If so, he would be glad to know. France was fighting for her life. The capture of Western Germany was but camouflage for the conquering of France and Belgium. If not, why was Germany on the Belgian frontier?

"Good gracious!" (translated—"Sapristi!")—said the Prime Minister. "What right, what reason has France to think Germany would walk into her country? She only wanted her occupied territory, and quite naturally."

France thought there was every reason, but no right. "I don't believe yer," interjected the Secretary for War, after the translation had been made. "Nong, nong," he added.

The Prime Minister thought that the world was too civilized to want to fight.

"But it is fighting," pressed the Belgian.

The Prime Minister repeated his statement. He thought the Germans would be willing to put the matter before the League of Nations.

The Frenchman remarked that since the League of Nations had only come into being because a lot of old men had not wished their sleep disturbed by bombs in the future, it was of no value and had no power.

“Rot !” said the Board of Trade. (“Ce n’est pas vrai,” translated the wise interpreter.)

The Prime Minister thought that the force of the Trades Unions could stop the war, and that his last letter had only reached the German Military. He would call a Trades Union International Meeting, and all would be well. (You see, he had faith in the wisdom of the fishes in his own pond, and provided the message could reach the river, all would be well ; but fishes cannot run on land, and there is more water in the river than fishes.)

The Belgian rose in fury. Did the British Prime Minister realize that all the time he was wasting in talking about things he did not understand, Belgian soldiers, French soldiers and, for all he knew, British soldiers were being murdered by the troops of these so-described Trades Unions ? Did he realize that Trades Unions did not exist in Russia, nor in Soviet Germany ? When would he get down to facts ?

The Prime Minister lost his temper. “You’re a Capitalist !” he cried.

“Well, what of it if I am ?”

The Prime Minister was taken aback. In the

past, that terrible reproof had silenced ; now it seemed to mean nothing. Nevertheless the Prime Minister repeated : " You're a Capitalist ! You're in league with the Capitalists ! "

" Yes, quite right. And the Socialists, and the Democrats, and the Radicals. We are all in league to save our country."

There was silence.

The Frenchman asked again : would England go to war, or would she withdraw her troops ?

There was a hurried consultation. " Go on, Will," said some one, and the Prime Minister made his final statement.

England would not fight at present ; the troops should stay, but he would address a letter to the League of Nations and the International Trades Unions and arrest the advance on the French frontier, if need be, though he was certain there was no intention to go beyond. As for Belgium, he was sure the enemy did not know it was so near to their frontier, and he would write about that.

The French and Belgians left, and returned to their countries in despair, though fully determined to fight like devils for their motherland.

That evening the Government issued an official statement :

" His Majesty's Government, having held a Conference with the French and Belgian representatives, are sorry to state that owing to the

somewhat extraordinary behaviour of these gentlemen, they have been unable to arrive at a co-ordinated policy. His Majesty's Government, however, while still retaining the troops on the Rhine, are communicating with the League of Nations and International Trades Unions and have every confidence that war will be averted."

And they were pleased with this, and the country breathed again. No war, how nice! Apprehension was, of course, everywhere amongst those who knew, but they were such a minority; so well had the majority been schooled in their ten commandments.

Syria was in turmoil. The Mohammedan troops, who had reached the sea at Cæsarea and had occupied Palestine, were marching north to Beyrout. In the north of Syria Killis had fallen, and the line ran: Lemas-Alexandretta-Killis-Biredjik; then along the Euphrates to Jaber, across to Seria-Kareitein-Lake Bahret es Shurkiyeh-Tabariah, and down to Cæsarea. The French were indeed making a gallant stand, and the '*Tricolor*,' with its Cedar of Lebanon on the white ground, waved in the breeze on citadels long expected to have fallen. Spahis and Foreign Legion, Malagaches and Regular Artillery, poured into Beyrout and divided north and south. Kaid in red cloaks brodered in gold and silver, silken '*genourr*,' vermilion '*sabbabet*,' and blue '*serouail*,' rode at the head of their detachments,

and “ *Ia Allahs* ” rent the air on both sides. Fat captains of Colonial Infantry, anchor on their ‘ *casque coloniale*, ’ did heroic deeds at the head of their chocolate-coloured children. They fought for the glory that never dies—the glory of arms, and they fought for the glory of France, the mother of soldiers.

Yet for years past, men had taught that nations do not exist, that the world is a Brotherhood, that oppression be met with a worse oppression, that the fruits of the earth can be enjoyed without labour, that there is no God but Liberty, that Wars are contrary to Nature, and that if a man strike once he will *never* strike again, provided he be addressed as ‘ comrade ’ ; and yet—when the gong went, the nations trooped down to dinner and sat in their own sets, despising the others. . . . The ’75’s boomed up and down the Euphrates, men choked, and lay still, and the red night of battle brought a redder dawn. In the heat of sun and the cloud of sand, flies buzzed eternally and rested in dark masses on the blood and skin of dying and dead. War was riding again. Conquest, out in the cold, smiled and encouraged. Famine licked his lips and watched the rivers drying, the fields withering. Death, afar off, whetted his scythe, tried a pass or two round his head, seated himself firm in the saddle, and turned to the west. He stood on Ararat and could see far : over the Persian Hills and on

to Mesopotamia ; over Anatolia towards Golden Stamboul, and the air of war refreshed him, and he, too, smiled.

“How long, how long?” went up the cry ; and St. Michael prepared his mail and chose a new sword, watching the vials of wrath being poured out : for was not the Euphrates drying up, and did not the plague break out amongst the soldiers of the earth ? Four of the Vials, then, had been poured, and as the sun rose high at midday and burnt, then did the fifth angel pour out his wrath, and men fell. Arabia marched to help the Crescent in Syria ; she crossed westwards from El-Arish and greeted Egypt in the Name of the Prophet, and the answer was well, and the union was made. The Suez was blocked, and dusky Arabs crossed on the half-sunken ships. British merchantmen passed Port Sudan, heard, and took the journey round, telling Mombasa and Zanzibar, Lourenço-Marques and East London, Durban and Capetown what strange things had happened, and prophesying that the British Navy would soon put things straight : but the Navy only watched. . . .

Yet, all the while, unrealized but in fact, the plagues were breaking out, the famine was starting, the sores bled and the rivers ran blood—from Baghdad to the Rhine, from the Rhine to Siberia. Opposition to war was the signal of death, and war was in the air. Brotherly love

as conceived by Karl Marx was showing its ways to a wondering, wavering world, and his disciples improved upon his doctrine and rejoiced. Still fat and comfortable were the Capitalists in England, but their dreams were ghastly. Still convinced of its calling was the Proletariat of England, and its dreams were of power and of Capitalism. The worship of the Beast was everywhere, and the Lamb was only prayed to in the dark places and in solitude.

And it was all taken so seriously, this humdrum life and making of vast fortunes, this 'yes, my lord,' and 'Let's go and see the Prince of Wales.' The kindness that was done was mocked, and called 'charity,' with an oath. And the dresses that were worn were the characters of the wearers, and the motor cars and footmen were the objects of existence. If a man make no money or worldly fame, he be damned. If he make a fortune from the blood of his workers, and receive an honour for a paid sum, be he cultivated. And the good, and the love, and the sympathy and honour of God were all wrapped up in a clothes-basket and labelled 'dirty washing,' by the voice of civilization that had invented so many wonderful things. In the dark watches of the night, harmful vice crawled the streets and the law winked an eye, and love was crushed and scorned. In the far-off only, could Nature see the light and know that soon all

would be explained and her laws appreciated.

* * * *

Ogóne received a letter. Not that this was the only letter he had received since we last left him, but because it was a letter destined to lead to strange things.

It was from the Patriotic Union again, and it announced a gigantic meeting to take place shortly in Hyde Park, wherein many speakers would urge the Government to send help to their French and Belgian allies at once. Would Ogóne speak? He knew the situation so well, and besides, he had become fairly well known. Ogóne thought this over, consulted Lorna and, receiving encouragement, decided to fall in with Mr. Middleman's wishes. He had suffered from a cold lately and was not feeling in the best of health; nevertheless, as the meeting was to take place some weeks ahead, he would in all probability be as well as ever by then.

Lorna stated she would come up to London and stay for the meeting with friends, and Ogóne thought it a relief to accept the Secretary's subjoined invitation to stay in Fellows Road for that week. He had received several letters lately from Russian friends in Paris, Belgrade, and Rome, giving much information; and those from Rome thought Italy would probably support Serbia should she need it, and that conversations were taking place in Paris, Rome and Belgrade

on that subject. There seemed to be signs of unrest in Austria, and German troops were said to have crossed and to be in Vienna. If Austria went Red, Italy could probably deal with it.

On the Rhine the war waged fast and furious. In the north, the Belgians and French fell back on Lennep, and the frontier was lost to them. Opposite Wesel, the Allies had dropped some five miles and the enemy was over. By Düsseldorf and Cologne, the French were holding fast, though the bridges had been destroyed. At Coblenz the enemy had effected a crossing; but south of this the line held, *viâ* Mainz to Germersheim. The Germans were over and as far forward as Lanterburg and Wanzenan, while Strassburg was encircled; and in the extreme south the enemy had been driven right in on Altkirch, Mühlhausen, Colmar, and Erstein. The enemy's supply of ammunition seemed inexhaustible and the fury of bombardment from guns and aeroplanes was terrific. Gas had been the cause of the loss in the south, and the Russian cavalry had been used to great advantage.

Germany echoed to the roar and rumble of trains as they sped from east to west, bearing arms and ammunition accumulated in Russia for years. Fair-haired, snub-nosed Slavs, dark, handsome Georgians, fat, happy Mohammedans from Southern Russia, dark-haired and blue-eyed Circassians, all wearing the five-pointed Red Star on

their caps, and full of the glory of war, swept westwards. Germans from Silesia and Bavaria, Prussia, Pomerania and Saxony marched with shining eyes carrying small gas-bombs and automatic rifles. Aeroplanes circled and swept over the country, dropping propaganda and tales of success on their far-away villages, and the mayor and people swelled with pride. The French aeroplanes were outnumbered by five to one, because of the Washington Conference, that playground of old age and ignorance of war! That Russia and Germany had been making birds of war for years past in North Russia did not disturb the sleep of England, and to every fresh piece of information communicated by France, England closed her ears, swearing to its impossibility, since these nations had formerly agreed to the terms of disarmament. The cry of "*Nach Paris!*" was heard again, mixed with the "*Da sdrastvouityie,*" from the Russians. Marching feet disturbed the country-side, and motors rushed madly hither and thither, bringing food and supplies to the masses in the west.

After a terrific bombardment just north of Cologne, great activity was noticed by the French of the opposite bank, and it was seen that huge rafts were being set afloat. The front line of the French troops on the rise of ground close to the shore had suffered terribly from the previous bombardment and was completely '*abruti.*' With

fearful, red-rimmed eyes, they watched these huge tall rafts come across, propelled by mechanical means, and apparently bearing nobody. The artillery tried for a hit, but unsuccessfully. Three came abreast together. They struck the bank simultaneously. With a roar, a deafening, stupefying crash the three rafts exploded. Cologne shook, and houses fell. The explosion was heard over half Prussia and Eastern France, and not a man of the front line of the North Cologne Front, for three hundred yards, lived. Immediately after, other rafts bearing infantry rushed across, and the bank was gained. Back fell the French, despair in their hearts. All down the Rhine the same thing was happening: breaches were being made and the line was falling back to conform. Trenches were dug by aged civilians round Paris and for miles in front of the French eastern forts. Panic was getting a grip. Russian Cavalry pushed on, was held up and retired, leaving the Infantry in charge. Artillery came up, aeroplanes dropped gas on villages, towns, and troops, and huge tanks driven automatically were hurled against fort lines, blown up, and breaches made wherein the enemy was soon stationed. And all this because people still had faith in Treaties, in spite of 1914, 1919 and 1920. The British troops still kept their distance and stayed a safe fifteen miles behind the front line, but they suffered from gassing sorely, and after a bit villages were con-

sidered not safe for billeting purposes, and holes in cabbage-fields were the result.

The G.O.C. held a consultation with the O.C.s of his small command, and the men were also consulted. The immediate result of this was the departure for England of a few officers and men, and the proffered resignations of the remaining officers. It had been too much for them, as the troops had decided to throw in their lot with France. Those who had no desire so to do had been ordered home, and the remainder were offered to the French general. So into the front line went the G.O.C., as Brigade Commander, with his battalions of Infantry and a regiment of Cavalry, under French command. Pride of race had been shattered in the hearts of these soldiers, and they willingly gave their lives to show there were still some Britishers worthy of respect who were not forgetful of the 900,000 dead of some years before.

About this time, volunteers from England, Scotland, Wales and even Ireland were making their way to France and enlisting—men of pride, men of adventure, men of folly. Back and back again, all along the line, fell the Belgians and French—and Belgium was a sacrifice to folly and idealism. The momentary French panic was changing, and over all France came the determination that, as this was to be the end, they could but fight to the last ; yet, what could six

millions do against twelve, with reserves up to five millions more—Russians and Germans? France, in desperation, called Italy to her aid, and she came, sending help to Serbia, and advancing on Austria who had also taken Russia to her bosom and was prepared to march on France. The situation abroad, however, seemed sufficient for the King to summon Parliament, and there WAS a row. Fatuous militarists, Die-hards and Conservatives urged immediate help for France. This was obviously nonsense, for the country would not stand war, at any price. Think what she had suffered in the last! Food had gone up, and travel had been restricted; bombs had even fallen on London and killed an old man and a baby. Would the upholders of War wish this again? Besides, we had no quarrel. "Then what about the *Entente Cordiale*?" asked a member. Ah, that was a point. . . . However—and here the Prime Minister told the House of the behaviour of the G.O.C. on the Rhine. "Shoot him!" cried the House. "Sack him!" cried others. But unfortunately he had sacked himself and was in another country. "Dirty aristocrat!" shrieked some one. "Capitalist!" cried another. But, strange to say, he was still alive after all this. The Prime Minister rose, and asked the House, point blank, what was to be done. If the House wanted war, of course they could have it. If, on the other hand, they wanted

peace, then the *Entente Cordiale* should be broken off. "Peace! Peace!" cried the House. "War!" said a few. So the Division was called, and Peace won, there being but seventy-four for War. Seventy-four Devils! War-mongers! Killers of babies and women! Capitalists!—and all the rest of it.

So the Brotherhood of Man won again, and the result was announced. Only one voice spoke—the others cheered. "*Mon Dieu!*" said that voice; and it came from the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery. The French Ambassador left the House and wired the news.

Thus again Great Britain deserted her ally and was content, blissfully hopeful of success. But the drought was still on the land and the sores were breaking out on the people, and the sun was hotter than usual.

The Alliance that had saved England in 1914 was broken at last, in the same way that the Alliance that had enabled us to leave the Pacific in trusted hands in 1914 had been broken.

Yet, back and back again fell the French, and Strassburg was taken. The British Government received two replies: one from Geneva, saying that they could do nothing; the other from The Hague, saying the German Trades Union delegates had joined their regiments and would pay no attention to them. The British delegates to

Geneva were thereupon recalled and told they were useless, which everybody knew.

So amazement gave place to nonchalance, and the British Government snorted and turned its attention to Land Nationalization, and took comfort from the bureaucrats and quires of paper that held applications for land and reports on spring onions. The newspapers wrote harrowing tales of new atrocities and engines of war, and spoke of French heroism grudgingly. Volunteers left England in hundreds, and their shame only left them on dressing in French uniforms. "No war! No war!" mass meetings continued to say. "Down with the Capitalists, who made this war!" said other meetings. "Down with the French!" cried a few.

And they all shouted and shrieked and were so helpful. Yet War rode hard, and changed horses and bows again, and the sweat poured from his brow. And the Beast blasphemed, and the people worshipped the Mark of the Beast. And the False Prophet rose and cried, "Allah is no more. The Beast is Allah!" Souls rose to their God and rested, learnt of the future and were glad. Mothers wept, and children were orphaned, and people blasphemed against God and saw not the reason. The seas ran blood, for the Third Angel had poured out his vial. And yet the people still saw not, but blasphemed yet the more.

THE autumn leaves tumbled over each other, rustled round the corners, eddied slowly earthwards and rose again to the breath of the wind. The trees waved their branches or bowed slowly, according to their nature, and many-coloured kine munched and chewed in the short pasture-land, turning a contemptuous eye, now and again, toward the road. On the distant hills, large birds went about their daily task, and sang or grumbled ; and very woolly sheep coughed and wheezed. The sun was bright and excessively hot for the time of year, and the little stream that flowed along had a smaller ripple than usual ; he was so low in spirit, since his food had been denied him for so long. But the sun did not mind this, and he shone all the more. His business was to give heat : what matter to him if Comrade Rain had gone on strike ! . . .

On the skyline, resting, stood two cart-horses, heads low and plough-tied, set magnificently against the background of blue with its great white lumps of cotton-wool floating past. The ploughman, corduroy-trousered and bewhiskered,

lit his blackened clay and hummed some old tune that had once pleased him. Long fat shadows gave the trees much satisfaction ; for the ground was their only mirror, and since all trees are colour-blind, black shadows were quite satisfactory. A long, thin forest raised pointed heads over the country-side and was a happy riot of red and green, yellow and brown. One tall silver birch was ashamed and hung its branches, for its neck was becoming bare of leaves and it disliked resembling a vulture. Little wisps of blue rose from cottages nestling in dingles. A farm-dog barked, and was silent.

A black-and-white cottage peered shyly from behind fast-thinning foliage, always prepared for a new shock. It had seen so many things. Once it had been a little lonely farmhouse, and horses had come thither. It had seen men dress in different clothes : had been awakened by a coach-horn : had shaken with fright on seeing a motor rush by on a newly made road. A dreadful bird-like machine had once flown over it ; and lastly, some criminal had riddled the inside walls with wires that sent a tingle from floor to rafter when a loud bell rang, and there were other wires that were the means of lighting up every nook and cranny with a horrid glare. Even outside, now, there was a terrible little machine thing that thumped and pounded away to give strength to the wires. Poor old house. . . . There was a

sweet smell in the air, enticed from the ground by the sun's warmth, and strange little flowers were born, to die by night when the cold came, for they were too early and should have slept on for ever so much longer. A field of cabbages sent a self-satisfied, raucous smell into the lanes, and annoyed the hedge-briers; but the field was very large, and the minority could not object. A great fat crow landed on top of an elm and wobbled about in an endeavour to balance. Defeated at length, he cawed shrilly and flew away, whilst from the trees around his school-mates joined him.

Among all this, through hedges and over fields walked the Reverend Septimus Ridsdell and Alexander Georgevitch Bobrishev, known as Shura, for short; or more generally, in public, Ogóne. The two climbed the ploughed slope and headed for the skyline. On the top, Ogóne stretched himself and breathed deeply. "*El h'mdullah*," he sighed.

The clergyman turned to the old ploughman.

"Well, George," he said, "it's wonderful weather."

"Ah, but there bain't no rain."

"Ah, but the sun's good, George."

"Aye; but it be too 'ot for the time o' year."

"You'd like it colder, then?" suggested the clergyman.

"When ut's winter, it did art to be winter, and

when it's summer, it did art to be summer ; least-ways that's what Oi says. Not all hupsy down, same as this 'ere." There was wisdom in his words. " They do say," continued the countryman, " as there 'asn't been no rain nowheres this last many months, and that's not as should be. There's summat wrong, Parson, that's what Oi says, summat wrong."

" Yes," said Parson, " it's strange, very strange."

" And it's my belief as if they opened Joanna Southcott's box, all 'ud be well ; but them bishops is fair frit, that's what it is—frit."

The clergyman smiled.

" And what's more," added George, " Old Moore ain't very happy about things, and it wouldn't be no wonder to me if the earth was to open and start a-swallowin' of us all hup. And it would do some folks a power o' good ; least-ways, most on 'em as spends their evenings in *The Dog*."

" Why is that? Don't you approve of their ways? "

" Such goin's on ! Such nonsense as never you'd believe, nor 'im neither," said George, indicating Ogóne with a large thumb. " They tarks and tarks ; fust about elections, then about England : but wot Oi says is, England's just about finished. But they says as Oi doan't know. But Oi does. It's them as doan't. . . ."

Ogóne interrupted. "What do they say?"

"Well, zur, they says as 'ow England's all roight, and as 'ow the Proime Minister 'll keep us all roight. But Oi says, 'open Joanna Southcott's box and then you'll know.' 'Hannah 'ell,' says they and Oi leaves 'em, not 'avin' no toime to start a-scrobblin' with such as them." The effort was great, so he spat.

The clergyman nodded sympathetically. The ploughman seized the handles and the thin rope: "Well, Oi must be a-gettin' on, Parson, Tch, tch. Gee oop," and the plough slowly moved forward and the earth opened up its heart; the horses strained; but steady were the guiding arms of the man. The clergyman and Ogóne watched the plough slowly descend the dip and the skyline before them was empty.

"Even among the husbandmen there is an interest in the country's welfare. It is rather extraordinary," said the clergyman at length.

Ogóne smiled. "Is he of your flock?" he asked.

"Yes. He lost his two sons in the War. He is rather bitter when he talks of that Government. He holds them directly responsible, and that's why he voted Labour for the first time in the history of his family."

"I don't think he was altogether wrong. One can hardly excuse a Government for a war, ever; and one can never congratulate a Government

on a successful war issue when their former policy led them into it. After all, people who make traps ought to know how to get out of them."

They passed through a gate and Ogóne picked a blackberry from the hedge. He ate it.

"This is very good," he said. "Could one live on blackberries, do you think?"

"Do you contemplate that?" asked the clergyman.

"No, not at the moment; but I think that one day fairly soon people will be thankful for uncultivated Nature."

"When the famine comes?"

"Yes, when the third Horseman rides."

"You know," said the clergyman, hitting a stinging nettle with his stick, "I am not nearly as certain about this destiny of mankind as I was before. After all, there have been wars before."

"No," replied Ogóne, "not wars, real wars; only conquests—the doing of the first Horseman. In the past, a war was waged, and the price at the end was new territory bound in bondage to the conqueror. In the last war, we tried to do that, too, but it did not work, and we gave back nearly as much as we took, and asked payment in money instead of in lives."

"How is it you are so certain of things?" asked the clergyman.

Ogóne looked ahead.

"Well, it was long before the war, when I was

in prison in Russia. It was one very early morning, and I was in a cell alone. It was very cold. I remember waking slowly and feeling, as it were, that my head was being supported by some one's lap. An arm that I could not see, but only feel, was near my head. The strangest sensation and atmosphere was around me. I was filled with an overpowering sense of love for the figure in whose lap my head was couched. I kissed the arm. I was very happy. And a voice said in Russian: 'Even as it was written, so shall it be.' I asked: '*Shto boodyet?*—What shall be?' and the voice replied: 'The wars, and the coming of the Lord.' I asked: 'As in the Revelation?' and the voice said: 'Even so.' In the early dawn I could not see, but I felt with my hand, and there was nothing; yet I know I was awake, for during this I had seen the little prison mouse look out of his hole, and the stars twinkle, and the foot of my wooden bed, where it was all worm-eaten. That's why I am certain."

"Perhaps a dream," said the clergyman shortly.

"Perhaps a vision," replied Ogóne.

"Yes. Anyhow, it is strange. Unfortunately, though I have often prayed, the good God has not wished that I see a vision. When Dick was killed, I often prayed that he might come to me, but he never did. My wife promised that she would come, but no—it was not allowed. How can you explain this?"

Ogóne thought for a moment. "I think it is like an English telephone exchange. It takes a long time to get through, and when you do, the person is out, or you have got the wrong number. But yet again, it may be that the '*Stimmung*' is absent. But I thought clergymen did not believe in the psychical world. . . ."

"Some think it incompatible with religion."

"Yet Christ's spirit visited His disciples. . . ."

"But that was divine—a divine visitation."

"Then there we differ, and we shall not argue more. Look, there's an old cow looking for water, and the brook is dry. Just like the Euphrates: ready for the kings to cross." And Ogóne laughed.

"Heartless wretch!" said the clergyman.

"But, Sep, look at the brook. It is dry, isn't it? Well, won't you believe?"

"Oh yes, up to a point; but . . ."

"Well?"

"It's most extraordinary; most singular." And the clergyman shook his head.

Through hedges, over stiles, across the dingles, along the valleys, on top of the banks, down the slopes, blown upon by the wind, barked at by dogs, spoken to by farmers, stared at by cows, fled from by ponies, went the two; and the trees swayed and the grass cried out for water.

Away south-east, a long way, the guns boomed and the bullets whistled, and men fell and cursed

their Maker. The tongues of war licked the guilt off the gingerbread, and stark-naked civilization ran hither and thither to escape the wrath to come, treasuring the words of the Beast in their hearts, for safety's sake. Old men sighed, young maidens wept, and children with wide eyes asked the reason, and turned to their toys again. But the English country-side slept in peace and only whispers of the dawn brought news of horrors and terrors from beyond the seas. Some few thought the times would come again when potatoes could once more fetch a war price, and a new car would be the farmer's reward, and perhaps a diamond ring for the wife; so peace lay in their hearts and withal contentment. . . .

"How long do you give the ending?" asked the clergyman, puffing as he climbed the slope.

"I cannot tell; but we must look to Megiddo for the answer. When the great battle takes place, we shall tell."

"Will you go to the war? Will you volunteer for the French Army?"

"No, I must stay. The people will need me yet."

The clergyman looked quickly at Ogóne; the intensity of the voice amazed him.

"The people—— That is a word I have begun to hate. You can have too much of Democracy, in my opinion. Look at this Nationalization, now. Where are the millions of land-yearning

workers from the city who were expected to rush here and plough and sow for all they were worth ? Where, I ask you ? ”

“ Give them time, Sep. The people are young and the time will not be given them to grow up. In our folly we think Land Nationalization and Social Reform is to be the salvation of mankind. There is but one salvation and that is in God. Without the love of brotherhood, no nationalization is worth a kopek. And brotherhood left the creed of Socialism when Force appeared—when the Beast first spoke. It is so ordained, and yet it seems wrong. The people **SHOULD** have a chance. But they forget that the people of to-day are the lords of to-morrow. The Rise and Fall of Families is not remembered, for the people live in the present and they are taught that the past is of no consequence. Perhaps not. . . . Oh, Sep, there are times when the utter hopelessness of it all makes me cry. If we only knew, if we only knew. . . . ”

“ Knew what ? ”

“ Knew the reason for our reincarnation ; for our striving for the Heaven ; for the existence of evil and sorrow. It is all so vast and our minds so small. And the wit and brilliancy of our genius is the ignorance of Heaven’s latest arrivals.”

The walk had led them round, and the back of the old Rectory showed through the autumn-tinted trees, and still the sun shone. It was

nearly tea-time. Away in the east the evening clouds were coming on. The sun began to send forth its rays to bid good-night to the birds and beasts and green things. They entered the Rectory. Lorna was writing; the tea had not yet been brought in. Letters lay on the table. Ogóne took up an envelope addressed in an unfamiliar hand. He opened it and glanced at the ending. He turned back and read :

“ MY DEAR ALEXANDER GEORGEVITCH,—

“ I expect you will be surprised to hear from me, but I want your advice. The situation is worrying me very much. It all seems so unnecessary. For the first time in my life I am ashamed of my country and I am glad to see that many many fellows are joining the French Army. Do you think it would be any good if I went too? After all, one can hardly have gone through the last war without feeling a kind of blood brotherhood with the French, and I feel the more of us who go, the more likely we may be forgiven for our treachery. Of course, if I did go, it would mean having to chuck the F.O. for good, as they would not have me back. But then, as you said, it will be the end, anyhow. I want you to advise me quite honestly about it. Here I have a good job and the satisfaction of knowing I am doing it to the best of my ability. There I should have a rotten job, but the satisfaction of having saved

my conscience. Which is it to be? I haven't said a word about it to my people, but one or two fellows I knew at Trinity are going and I should like to be with them. I ask your advice because I feel—oh, so many things, but then, being English one must not say them! The situation is such that I shall either have to join up or wear a red tie and dance the '*Carmagnole*' in Hyde Park—or the Albert Hall! There seems no other way for me. I am too sick with things to have any fear of death and I am therefore selfish because no one is dependent on me and I have really nothing to lose.

"I am more than glad Italy has come in. I love Italy. The people there are so human, so—as they should be, and think less of non-essentials than we do. If you are speaking in this big meeting I see is coming off, I will be there if possible. Perhaps you might care to come and dine afterwards. If you say I should go, I will go and set about it at once. What regiment or branch of arms do you suggest? Of course, I was an Infantryman before. Or, on the other hand, do you think it any use my trying the Italian Army? My mother has been rather seedy lately, and I don't want to spring it all on her suddenly; but I suppose if it must be we shan't be able to help it.

"It's a miserable, cold day to-day, but thank goodness, no rain; in fact, I don't seem to remem-

ber any for some time now. I should like to tell you some day how much I enjoyed meeting you and I bless the Fates that made the boss send for you, although it didn't turn out to his satisfaction. I think you were right not to go though. He hasn't mentioned you to me at all since then. If things are going to end exactly as you said, I wonder if I shall be spared. I should like to see a Heavenly Italy, that is something in Heaven even more beautiful than Italy on earth. Now I come to think of it, I should prefer to die crying '*Avanti Savoia!*' rather than '*Vive la France!*' It sounds finer.

"When I started I hoped I should write a long and interesting letter, but the mood is off. I want your advice, though, and I trust your experience. Write by return if you can, I am not in the mental state to dally with my decision for long. I shall watch the post.

Yours ever,

"DAVID TRYTON."

Ogóne moved to the writing-table that Lorna had just left and started to write :

"MY DEAR DAVID,—

"I answer at once. As you hint, it does not matter really what you do, but I think your conscience should tell you. If any one revile you, you can always say with Barrington :

' True patriots we ; for, be it understood,
We left our country for our country's good.'

" Only you would say it in a different sense.

" You speak about the rain. I think you'll find it will not rain again. That seems a terrible thing to say, but conviction is becoming my mistress—and she's a great flatterer too. If things had been different I could not let you go alone ; but we'll look to meeting in the new land, if God in His mercy sees fit to spare us. As regards which regiment—why not try the Zouaves ? But no, you might not like the Algerian Jew. Then really it might be as well to go in the Italian Army. The uniform would go with your eyes. However, '*davolno*'—look it up in your boss's dictionary.

" We are having very pretty weather here, only a little too much wind. We went for a long walk and have just come in. I read this last sentence again and feel how English I am. Is that a good thing ? You will not forget to see me before you go, as I have things to say. I will dine with you after the meeting, if I am alive. I wish you were staying here. You would like my cousin, and the girl is very dear, and so pretty that you might lose your heart and not want to go to Italy at all. The girl is not like your London girls. She has eyes and nose and teeth and things like them, but she knows she is here to help people and not all to amuse herself. I think she fears

me. She is not communicative, but all the same is '*sehr sympathische*.'

"Do you like it when the guns speak and the earth shakes and the noise is there and so is the mud? That part of war I did not like; I was only thrilled. What is War's real glory is the sense of comradeship—the true Socialism, the self-sacrifice and the understanding. God bless the understanding. Nature was happier in the War in one way; her doctrines were being felt for the first time in this mad, materialistic world. I don't like any poets who praise War, except those who know it and have felt. The former are as ridiculous as those who deny the glory of it all. France is truly the Mother of Soldierly—is that right as a word? I admire her so very much, and she is fighting splendidly as all of us knew she would. Poor Belgium too seems to have great trouble and it was a fine little nation; a little suspicious and uncharitable perhaps, but who could blame them? I am staying in London with Mr. Middleman of the Patriotic Union. I think his initials are A. L., so you would find it in the directory, should you wish.

"They have brought tea in, and I should stop now. You asked my advice; I give it to you: Save your conscience and, if you wish to follow the preachings of your Government, become an Italian, since there are no nations and the proletariat must be international. I see there is a

protest about volunteers going. It seems to me extraordinary. Couldn't the volunteers go forth under a banner saying : ' We go to save the French Proletariat.' Surely it would then be allowed. I am bitter, David, when I see the Socialism for which I suffered as a boy turned and twisted to become the refuge for anybody who is dissatisfied. However, it will all lead to the same abyss. Go forth and prosper. I shall pray for you, as you would wish me to.

" *Da svidania,*

" SHURA BOBRISHEV."

By the tea on the little table near the fire was placed a lamp, and the three sat round and ate. The blinds were drawn and the maid left the room, shutting the door softly behind her. The logs spluttered and spat, and the embers glowed with satisfaction as the chips of burnt wood dropped down and became as they—red and gold. Outside, the wind played and frolicked, tossing dead leaves here and there, giving them no peace. The cedar on the lawn creaked and swayed and in its familiar wheezy tones said to the wind : " You set me swaying so. Desist ! " For it was a pompous old tree and used pompous words And the wind only said " Whirr, whoo ! " in reply. He liked to see the trees bow. He was a Capitalist—one of the ruling class. . . .

The silence was at length broken.

"More from the Patriotic Union, Shura?" asked the host.

"No. It was from young Tryton. He wants to help Italy and enlist."

"The boy in the Foreign Office, is it?"

"Yes," said Ogóne.

"You told him to go ahead and do so, I suppose?"

"I did."

There was silence again.

"Well, well. It's most extraordinary, but I suppose it's as good as staying at home in these days with everything upside down. Poor boy; poor boy!" And the worthy clergyman brought his two hands down with a smack on his knees, and shook his head.

Lorna pouring out another cup of tea for her father, said: "I sometimes feel that it would be a good thing if the Ice Age were to come on us again, and we could have another chance."

"Perhaps when the ice clears from the two Poles it may sweep north and south and envelop us again, leaving the Poles as the New World; for assuredly in the early days England was much like what the Arctic and Antarctic regions are now," said Ogóne.

"It makes one think of the enormity of time, doesn't it. . . . Who is this youth you are sending to his death, Shura?" asked Lorna.

"It is a young man who fought once for the

honour and salvation of his country and wishes to do so again. It is a strange wish after the way the country has treated its saviours, but it is very English. He is very young, really, but brilliant in some things and ordered in his convictions. You would therefore like to meet him, I suppose? "

"I should," was the reply.

"That's good. And if he agrees with me too much, you will upbraid me for influencing him and he will be indignant. But what else could the boy do? What else can any conscientious man do under the circumstances? "

"You honestly think, then, that Englishmen must go abroad to this fight? Won't they be needed here? "

"I think you will find that at the end there will be too many people left in England," said Ogóne quietly.

"Well, all I say is that it is about time we had more rain," and the clergyman rose and walked to his desk. "I shall rest a little before dinner," he said, and turning, left the room.

Lorna took up some knitting from out a drawer. Ogóne lit a cigarette.

"Shura . . ."

"Yes? "

"Don't you think you might leave all this, and not be so certain . . . so depressed by your beliefs that after all have no solid foundation? "

Ogóne's eyes blazed and shone bright in the lamplight.

"Is that what you think? And I thought you were not like the others. I thought you alone had faith. . . . Can't you see the signs of terror all round you? Think of the fighting now on the Rhine, and the dead and dying. Think of the rivers all drying up, and the earth-thirst. Can't you see? Isn't it obvious?"

Lorna hung her head. "Yes," she said, "I do see—up to a point. I see your sincerity—your faith; but it makes you so depressed, and I don't like to see that. I am not so clever as you, and perhaps I cannot understand as you would wish."

"Do you want to understand?"

"Of course," answered Lorna immediately. There was a pause.

"I am afraid of women," said Ogóne at length. "I have never been used to telling them things. I did once. Once, long ago, in Russia; and I was betrayed, and I suffered for it. A Russian prison, Lorna, is a heavy price to pay for a woman's faith. Those days will never leave my mind. I might have been some great worldly use had I not suffered there. I think it unhinged me, as you say."

"Is 'worldly use' your object? Are you losing faith?" Lorna was slightly mocking.

"Don't mock me, please. . . . It is hard to keep faith, and harder still when one you have a

great respect for is determined to break it. I sometimes feel so old, so very old, as if I had lived for generations. It makes me realize how often I have failed in past incarnations and that I have had to go through my span on this earth so many times. Haven't you noticed little children, how old they are? And how some children only become young as they grow older? It is the old, old soul, Lorna. The soul that has had to return again and again to this world, because it is not spiritually advanced enough for the next. I sometimes look into a child's eyes, and I know its sub-conscious mind has seen so much. In a child's eyes is the concentrated misery of a thousand years; the wisdom of Solomon; and the eyes know it all, but the brain and body are new, and old souls despise new bodies, even as old men their grandsons. They only love the beauty of youth or its modern adventures. I always think that children and sunsets should go hand in hand. They are the two saddest things I know. And I, Lorna, am an old, old soul—so tired of it all! But I feel my end is near. I feel I am on the road to freedom. And your soul is not old; in fact, it is young. Your soul is purer than mine."

"How do you mean—purer?" asked Lorna thoughtfully.

"It can only bring the highest ideals from a lower sphere, and they are as yet untarnished by

the baseness of this one. Mine is different. It is tarnished very badly."

"By sin? How do you define sin, Shura?"

"Differently from most, I am afraid. To me there are two sins—sin against a person and sin against yourself. By 'sinning against a person,' I mean: to be uncharitable; to ruin a person in the eyes of Nature unjustly; to refuse help; to slander without cause; to betray; to be unsympathetic. To sin against yourself is: to be a hypocrite; to forgive, when conscience and Nature forbid; to help wrongly for your own benefit; to be luxurious and snobbish; that is a sin against yourself, for it hurts no one else. To forget God; to please yourself always; to love too much, to hate too much; and again, to love too little and hate too little. Is it an unusual doctrine? I feel it is natural—more natural than man's law."

Lorna said nothing.

"Well?" asked Ogóne.

"I feel you are wrong; too harsh. I am sorry." And after a quick glance at her knitting, she raised her eyes to Ogóne's and smiled.

"Why did you never marry, Shura? A wife would have done you good."

"I am too selfish. I keep too much to myself. I have been a wanderer, and that is not good for a wife. Some people thought well of me in the old Russian days, amongst the comrades of our

Society. I reigned in hearts then. But my comrades are all dead. Murdered for their love of liberty and mankind. Burnt by the breath of the Beast whom they created. Frankenstein's creation was never more dreadful than ours. And it's a sad thing that in Russia, if you ask a peasant now, who are the most hated, he will tell you the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries of Russia ; for they overthrew Nicolai, and the sorrow of the people dates from then. After years of work and imprisonment for the people our work is rendered useless, and those that did nothing are in our places, living in power and plenty whilst the people starve. But the people are for the Lamb, and their time shall come. Is it difficult to imagine me talking red hatred to the people ? Is it difficult to imagine me defying Nicolai's Cossack '*paroutchik*' ? I am milder than I was. I have learnt what Fate really means. I am content to wait. When the guns move nearer, we shall see. England's glory started from the overthrow of Papal tyranny : it shall end with the overthrow of the Antichrist—the Beast and the False Prophet. But it is not the Prophet's fault : it is the fault of his followers, and he can only sigh."

"Shura, you are very Russian in your fatalism."

"I am very Russian. I know it. I would sacrifice all for what I feel is right ; the lesser

for the greater. I am like the Cossack Chief on the Volga."

"What did he do?" asked Lorna.

"It was on the Volga, and the Chief had lately married a wife. He, his wife, and his men were rowing down the river, and his men said: 'Our Chief is becoming a woman. He spends all his time in that woman's company and forgets his children the Cossacks. We shall have to have a real man as a Chief and leave following him, for he can no longer fight.' And the Chief heard. He just threw his wife in the Volga and they were all friends again and he led them to battle. I would do that, I think. It's the lesser sacrifice for the greater object. . . ."

"How horrible of him!" said Lorna.

"No," said Ogóne, "it was the best thing to do. A man should not lose his manhood, it is his greatest asset."

"You have a poor idea of women, then?"

"Aren't they too sentimental, and not affectionate enough—not true enough to the higher object? After all, sacrifice of self is a good thing, but only when it benefits a majority. That's why nuns are wicked—they sacrifice themselves to their own illusions, with a strange sense of theatricalism—is that a word? Yes? Do you remember the story of Lake Van? Of the queen who fell in love with the neighbouring king, her enemy? And he, also in love, built a home

on the island in the middle of the lake and refused to see any one—dying of love. And yet, because she was his enemy, he would not speak. And she, poor thing, built another castle on the shore and watched her lover without speaking, till she died. They should have married and united the two peoples, but they were both theatrical.”

“ I think it was very sad.” And Lorna threw a log on the fire, her long string of amber beads catching the light and swaying slightly.

“ What are you going to say at this meeting, Shura ? ” said Lorna, sitting back in her chair and resuming the knitting.

“ How can I tell ? I must first see the people. But I must not forget the message ; I must not forget that. I must do it well ; I must do that.” Ogóne was speaking very low. His brow was furrowed.

“ What message, Shura ? ”

“ The coming of God. The preparation for it all.”

“ And you honestly believe it ? Implicitly ? ”

Ogóne rose, his whole body shaking ; his eyes were dim, his body stiff. He raised his hand.

“ Babylon shall fall and with it all those whose names are not written in the Book of the Lamb. For the world is for the Beast. And the Lord shall come in all His glory, and the Beast shall be beaten and the wicked perish. And there shall be no more sea. . . . ”

Ogóne's hand dropped. He sank limply in his seat, his head in his hands and the firelight playing on his beard. Lorna was disturbed. She put her hand on his shoulder. The door opened and the maid came in to clear away. Without turning, Lorna said, "Leave the tea, please, till I ring." And the maid went out.

"What is it, Shura? Tell me. . . ."

There was no answer.

Lorna rose, and walked to the window. She did not quite know what to do. The last speech had been said in such an odd manner. She thought Shura had had a seizure. Outside, the night was dark, the wind still blowing. There was no comfort there. She dropped the edge of the curtain and turned to Ogóne again. There was a strange atmosphere in the room, and Lorna was afraid. Suddenly the lamp spluttered and went out. Lorna screamed. This last was too much for her. She was really frightened. The scream was loud and brought her father from his room. He opened the library door and saw nothing but darkness and the dim firelight. He stood on the threshold.

"What is it?" he called excitedly. "What's the matter?"

He struck a match and lit a candle on the writing-desk.

"Well?" he asked.

"Oh, father, I am sorry. Shura was speaking

so oddly, and suddenly he collapsed in his seat and didn't answer, and then the lamp went out and I screamed. It was silly of me."

The clergyman went to the lamp, lifted it in his two hands and slowly shook it back and forth. "No oil!" he said.

Ogóne stirred in his chair and passed a hand over his forehead. He looked up and, seeing Lorna's white face in the candlelight, said:

"I think I've been asleep. Strange, all of a sudden like that, too!"

The clergyman looked at his daughter, but no more was said on the subject.

"I'll go and get some more oil," said Lorna, still nervous, as she left the room.

"You frightened the life out of that girl, Shura. What did you do? What happened?"

"I forget. I really don't know. I was talking and I suppose I fainted. I've never done that before in my life. Did the lamp go out then? Why was she frightened?"

"I gather at something you said and then with the lamp going out. I suppose she was overwrought. You can't remember what you said then?"

Ogóne thought. "I think I said: 'There shall be no more sea and . . .' Yes. I remember now. I was going to say something after that; something I never knew before; something that had just come into my head. But I didn't

say it. I wasn't allowed to, perhaps. So I fainted. I can't remember what it was. I wish I could, oh, I wish I could!"

"Perhaps it will come back to you."

"No. I feel I must not say it yet. It is the last word. I feel I was too soon with it." He seemed agitated.

"Most extraordinary," said the clergyman. Sometimes Ogóne completely mystified him and in his heart of hearts he often thought him unbalanced.

The days passed, and in the mornings Ogóne wrote on music, and made his preparations for London. In the afternoons he went for walks with the clergyman or by himself, and once or twice with Lorna. The days were very uncertain. Cold and heat seemed to be playing alternate games and the only part of the weather that remained certain was the complete absence of rain. Winter crops were going to be a hopeless investment, and all over the world the same story was told. Nature was imitating mankind, becoming capricious and entirely unnatural—even artificial. Outside, the farmers grumbled and argued; inside, the wives counted the dwindling pennies and were economical to a fault, so afraid were they of the future. The towns, however, noticed nothing unusual but the rise in food prices and the lack of delicacies. Death was finding its way into a few homes, when the casualty

lists of the British volunteers came through. Parents whose sons had remained alive after the last war made their sacrifices in this, and were sadly proud of it all.

Ogóne, in Durham, was due for London and he accordingly went, strong in faith, and not unmindful of a certain nervousness that weighed on him at times and destroyed confidence. Lorna had promised to be in London for the meeting, but as it would not take place for some days, she deferred her departure till later in the week.

As the train sped south, strange looked the land, hard and dry, cracked and wrinkled. Streams had given up the struggle, and the rivers were lower than man had ever known. It was the chief topic of conversation in the train; but for the most part the verdict was: "It'll rain to-morrow." But the morrows were just as unsatisfactory, and still optimists hoped.

In London, amidst trundling omnibuses and sliding taxis, Ogóne made his way to Hampstead, home of Cosmopolos himself (if he ever was an individual, or could be made into one). In Fellows Road he found his destination and was welcomed by Mr. Middleman and ushered into the cramped cosiness of the parlour. An evening paper was thrust into his hand as soon as he had removed his coat and was prepared for conversation. A passage in the journal was marked in X's with a blue pencil.

"What do you think of that?" asked his host in disgust.

Ogóne read: 'The Germans are within a few miles of Verdun and are bombarding the forts to such an extent that those who were in the last siege of that town cannot recall such a concentration of fire. Little hope is entertained of a prolonged resistance. . . .'

"Well, I expected as much," said Ogóne, raising his head.

"And we do nothing! Good God! It's enough to make you weep!" And Middleman turned to the fire and fingered the ornaments on the mantelshelf.

"It doesn't matter though . . ." said Ogóne. Middleman turned abruptly.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because the end is in sight."

"The end of what?"

"The world."

"Bunkum!"

"As you wish. Well then, it does matter."

"Of course it matters. Here are we, waiting helplessly for an invasion, and all the Government can do is to send Notes like old President Wilson. They talk about the Proletariat and Democracy, and this and that. . . . It really is amazing, there's no other word for it. I really believe that the only cure is a revolution. Yes, I do. And I'm not alone in thinking that."

"And what do you advocate? Sending help to France?"

"Of course. I'd go myself for twopence."

"Is this to be brought in at the meeting?"

"I can't tell. We shall have to see."

"How many speakers have you got for next week? Do you expect a big crowd?"

"There are about twenty different speakers; of course, on different platforms. I think we shall raise some enthusiasm. We have our branches who will march from all their centres with banners and bands and all that sort of thing. Oh for the good old days! Give me a Salisbury Government again. Honest, educated administration!"

"So the wheel is trying to come round again . . ." said Ogóne, smiling.

"What wheel?"

"The wheel of evolution—Monarchy, Revolution, Distress, Reaction; and then, Monarchy again. You are now fighting Distress, and want Reaction."

"Yes, I suppose it's that. We never seem to be satisfied—do we?" This last—hopelessly.

"One can hardly be satisfied at incompetence and ignorance. How much do you think the Government knows of any country or people outside this?"

"Pretty well nothing at all, I should say; and of course that is one of the chief reasons for their

behaviour. But if there was only another election, they wouldn't stand a chance."

"Oh, yes, they would. The wheel is not so quick as that. Why, railways and mines are not nationalized yet. There is no distress worthy of the word."

"Oh, you're judging by Russia. I tell you that for England there's quite enough distress and to spare."

"On the part of the Capitalist, perhaps."

"The Capitalist is bankrupt. There is no industry. All the money is leaving the country for America."

"I didn't know that."

"But it's a fact."

A woman entered the room. She advanced, hand outstretched.

"I'm so glad you came," she said to Ogóne.

"My wife," said Middleman shortly.

The three thereupon spoke in the usual conventional way, punctuated by violent tirades from Mr. Middleman. It appeared that the worthy gentleman's spouse was a violin-player of some repute, and consequently Ogóne was booked to play her accompaniments in the Wednesday and Saturday evening Chamber Music that took place at the house. An argument as to the merits of Scriabine and Debussy compared with Mozart and Mendelssohn left a majority in favour of the latter and quite a Lloyd Georgian denunciation

of the former. They spoke of the Greater Masters in subdued tones, and ridiculed modernism in music. This conversation was mostly confined to guest and hostess, since Mr. Middleman could play no instrument, though fancying himself on the drum. Later, Ogóne interested his friends in tales of the Russian Revolution, of Kornilov and Kerensky, of Rasputin and the Tsar, of Ulianov and Bronstein. He spoke of the pogroms and the yellow tickets, and of the soul of peasant Russia; the smell of fish and of the Russian stoves. The stirring tales of Transcaucasia's struggle for independence and the failure; and of the great Communistic disease and its extraordinary infection.

At Chamber Music he met some interesting folk. An old flautist, ex-schoolmaster and Egyptologist. A 'cellist—short-haired female, clad in green and brown patches, a thing that might have been a quilt, but was called a dress. A violin-player with sagging breasts, dark hair plaited over her ears—Dutch fashion, who was anæmic, and used to live in Vienna. A tall, long-haired, mincing young man who said 'Yes, my dear' and 'No, my dear,' and writhed amusingly, came to sing, and did so in a high tenor voice and with too much expression. He also recited modern verse and was proud of his hands. Such were the people, the enthusiasts, who came twice a week and performed together really well.

A fat, cheerful widow was to have played the piano, but she gave way to Ogóne and expressed the belief audibly that "never, never, never have I heard anything so divine as Mr. Bobrishev's playing!" All of which was very nice; and harmony reigned, in two senses.

Mrs. Middleman herself, tall, dark and round-faced, with a hard mouth and 'teeth together' smile, was kindness itself. In fact, amidst these congenial surroundings, Ogóne felt the haven before the open sea, the last rest before the struggle. Sub-consciously he felt uneasy of the immediate future. His soul was fighting hard between indecision and certainty; but the latter would win, because of the faith that though often in the background was ready to come forward at a moment's notice and raise his hopes once more. In the later evening, when the guests had gone and his host was walking the old flautist home, Mrs. Middleman being upstairs, Ogóne sat in the dim light and played from his heart, on the baby Blüthner, his thoughts travelling far and wide. As his thoughts were sad, so was his music; and in varying feeling did the piano interpret his soul. From Viennese Waltz to Beethoven's *Appassionata*, from *Arabesque* to *Liebestraum*, from a Moskowski *Berceuse* to a Chopin *Polonaise*, into a melody of his own, and through Brahm's Waltzes to a Russian love-song. In rapid sequence, in slow sequence, all according to the passing mood

—and outside a taxi would hoot and Ogóne shiver with a sudden spasm at the dissonance. The *Waldstein* Sonata sent its chords and gentle harmonies through the corners of the wicked little villa, making it vibrate in conceit and think how much more cultured it was than its neighbours ; for houses in suburbs are taught these things by what they hear.

When Mr. Middleman returned, Ogóne was still playing, so his host stepped softly into the room and listened. The music ceased.

"If you could only play to your audience instead of speaking, Bobrishev, you'd have them all on their knees to you in no time," said the host.

Ogóne smiled ; and the house shut its eyes for the night, and slept.

The next and subsequent mornings, afternoons and evenings were spent amidst posters and papers, stamps and envelopes, organizing the biggest meeting London had ever known. Men and women came in and out, typewriters clicked and tongues licked, bustle and order reigned supreme. Mr. Middleman's powers of organization were put to a severe test and proved most excellent. The whole of London, which had received preliminary notices of the meeting, now received final orders and were told of their local organizer, marshals, and banner-bearers. Police were informed, and the Home Secretary was

troubled. Enthusiasm ran riot and applications to be allowed to speak poured in, and were dealt with. Greater London prepared to pay its share more now than it had ever done in the past; Dulwich hoped to muster thousands—the black-coated workers were awake and determined that the Sunday could not be spent in a better way. The newspapers in some quarters boosted and advertised; in others, ridiculed and raved. But the latter were, as usual, the best propagating agents.

In the middle of this, Parliament suddenly brought in its promised Bill for Nationalization of Railways and Mines, and a Capital Levy on all fortunes over five thousand pounds. What an excitement there was! And it was immediately followed by the exportation of millions of capital to the United States of America, Japan, and Scandinavia. Middleman fumed and fretted, and sent out more circulars; and the support was ever increasing. People felt that it was now but a case of fighting or going under altogether, and dark suggestions flowed in, with hints of arms and ammunition.

The Government began to be disturbed at the excitement caused by the preparations for this great procession, and even thought of prohibition. Saner counsels, however, prevailed, and the old doctrine of a former Cabinet—'Wait and See'—held the day.

Ogóne worked night and day with his friend to perfect the arrangements. Speakers were chosen and informed, platforms were allotted and defined, waggons and drays engaged and allotted to the various districts of London and its suburbs.

Men and women wore the green-and-white rosettes of the Union, and proudly showed them off, amidst cheers or laughter according to the whim of the place and moment. News from abroad filtered through, and old soldiers remembered the names of villages and spun yarns of the days gone by when such names were even better known.

The French were still falling back. Lille had fallen ; Laon would fall soon ; Rheims was surrounded and Belfort had disappeared. Worn out, and parched with thirst, the garrison of the latter town had been forced to surrender, and dismay shook fair France from one end to the other. The rain of shells had been unceasing, the swish of machine-gun fire had hissed over the dead and dying and washed more soldiers into the arms of death. Gas took its toll in villages far from the line ; and flame-projectors, highly developed, shot fire for many yards and could now rain down flaming oil into recesses and dug-outs. Bombs of all sizes and shapes made the human body ghastly and tore the beauty from the face and cast it at the soldier's feet. Death rays came from searchlights and sent large ammunition-

dumps to glory. With every enemy advance new tortures became apparent, new terrors arose or descended. In every shell was arsenic-powder so that, gasping and sneezing, the French were mown down by the unsmelled gas that followed, intermingled with the rain of H. E. and lighter projectiles. From the sky there fell great smoke-clouds which allowed the enemy to advance and use the bayonet before the French knew its meaning. Thus trenches were occupied and hills assailed, canals were crossed and banks consolidated. And every night behind the French front line, the old farmer and his wife would come up and till his field or gather his cabbages and take them home to sell. And if, the next day, his work would be all undone—well, it was up to the next farmer to try, and may better luck attend him! And if the old farmer did not return in the early morning—well, it was all for his country that he died; he could do no better.

Thus for France. And in London the great day arrived.

From Hampstead, Westminster, Kensington, Bow, Putney, Richmond, Wandsworth, Golders Green, Finsbury Park—everywhere, came processions and banners, drays and bands—all centralizing on Hyde Park. In perfect order, quietly disciplined and marshalled, came the people of the Metropolis to protest against the Government attitude and demand their resignation. Electors

who had never bothered to vote had at last been awakened by the Press and the Union, and had joined the throng in some indignation with every one else for having let things come to such a pass. The number of participators quenched the desire of many to ridicule and, in some cases, these followed on, hopeful of amusement, or at any rate of surcease from the routine of an ordinary English Sunday.

Arrived in the Park, each contingent made its way to its numbered platform, led by a marshal who awaited his party at his appointed Park gate. Assembled round the platform, the bands broke out into the marching tune of the Union, and lusty voices sang the doggerel that had been issued on printed slips before their departure. Police on horseback and on foot shepherded here and there, and listened to their instructions as from time to time they came through.

Ogóne and Mr. Middleman were to address the Dalston and Silvertown contingents, and from all platforms there commenced a series of exhortations, entreaties and outbursts that certainly seemed to be to the liking of the listeners.

The one urged an immediate General Election ; the other, an overthrow of the Government by force. One platform railed against Land Nationalization, another against Railway Nationalization and a third against Industrial Nationalization. Many urged that an army be formed at once to

help France. A few pointed out the inevitable result of neutrality, and spoke horribly about the drought. Food was going up, they were told; wages were coming down. Industries were closing, unemployment was on the upward path. And the crowd listened and cheered, laughed or ridiculed; but they did not become unduly excited: it was not in their nature.

The clouds were rolling up with the slight, cool blowing wind, and some men turned and hoped for rain. Still the speakers continued and the crowds increased. It seemed as though all London were in the Park. . . .

As a psychological study the crowd was interesting. Of all classes and of all creeds; of all sizes, of all different outlooks on life, yet, in this, they were united. To say that the protest was directed against Nationalization or against Capital Levies would be right, in a small degree; but the chief reason was Fear. A fear of what would happen should France be beaten; a fear of invasion, and a hatred for those who could not perceive. For years past, fanatics and well-meaning folk had taught hatred—class-hatred and jealousy; and if that hatred were to become a National one, or to turn round and become a hatred of one's governors, it was not surprising. The hatred of Force in Russia had produced a worse force. The hatred of the Capitalist class in Italy had produced hatred of the Communist.

It is so difficult to keep such a thing within bounds: so easy to hate, so difficult to hate the right thing. Besides, that was all a denial of true Socialism. Hate was never in the programme of the first Socialists; it was the doctrine of ignorance. But such a disease it was that, unnoticed and even unheard, it could be felt; and bit by bit it ate its way into the heart of mankind.

Certainly there was much of it in the speeches, and it did its work well and laid its seed. The speakers were varied. There were working men and artisans, lawyers and politicians, bank clerks and ex-soldiers, retired admirals and doctors, clergymen, and women of all classes. To a foreigner, the scene was indeed strange. It was strange that such an assembly could be; and yet, so quiet with it all. No knives, nor revolvers, nor screaming. No purple faces and foaming mouths; no haggard faces and wicked threats of blood.

Passing from platform to platform, one could notice an interest, agreement, determination even, but more than that—no. Compared with Russia, the difference was remarkable. There, a crowd of dull, dull faces, shouting in unison at the prompting of officials. Here, unsolicited accord, intelligent thought.

And the heavens became darker.

Rain, rain; thunder perhaps. . . . The end

of the drought in all probability. Such thoughts ran through mind and mind, as individuals glanced heavenwards and then re-turned their gaze to the speakers.

A sea of faces gazing towards Ogóne filled him with an inexpressible sorrow ; a sorrow of negativity, because so much could be done and so little would be.

Cheers for France rent the air, and curses were hurled on the heads of Germans and Russians. It was indeed a change of thought for the Park.

And the sky became darker still ; it was difficult for speakers to see their notes. It seemed as though the police were increasing in numbers. Perhaps the enthusiasm was too still to be natural. Perhaps fresh orders had arrived.

Mr. Middleman had finished. He sat and wiped his forehead. Another speaker rose. A young ex-Service man, full of vehemence and life. He was of the people and he spoke of the people. Their catch-phrases were his, and cleverly turned at that. His movements were theirs ; their strident voices his monopoly. And well did he speak. As a recruiting speech it was most excellent. He stated he was leaving for France on the morrow, and he offered his companionship to those who should need it and would take it, in their effort to stop the enemy before it was too late. Shouts showed he would not go alone to-morrow. He cried that the Government was

trying to stop voluntary help being sent to France. He called it an infringement of the Liberties of the People. . . . And that went down very well. He was using the methods of the uneducated Demos, and turning them to his own use.

In the distance, the cheering of far-away crowds rumbled through the darkening air, and an answering shout would return. It was stirring in its vastness.

Ogóne's eyes peered ahead, vainly searching for the woman who had promised to be there. That one woman who, for some inexplicable reason, seemed to appeal to him, seemed to influence him. Perhaps she had not come, after all ; or she may have gone to another platform. He thought of her sincerity and of the difference between her and so many of her sex ; of her lack of snobbery and affectation ; of her simplicity and talents ; of her kindness in the parish. She had always done her best for those less fortunate than herself, and had shown a devotion to her father that was worthy of the greatest commendation. In life, Ogóne had never felt the need of woman ; yet he thought, here amid the multitude, if ever woman could give him comfort, Lorna would be the one. He turned, reverie broken, and watched the young speaker. He thought of the sorrow of which his life must have been composed ; of the never-known youth, and of the grim friendship of death which was

around him when joy and happiness should have been his portion. He thought of the struggle for existence and of the moment, which was full of menace and yet more sorrow.

The speaker was finishing; it was Ogóne's turn next, and he had no idea of what he was to say. He relied so much on atmosphere for his method of address. He relied so much on his brain for the fluency of speech. When the last speaker had closed, the crowd applauded whole-heartedly. He had been a success.

Ogóne rose. Slowly and decidedly he started. His words were well chosen and clearly spoken. He was holding a strong reserve. He showed the immediate past, and they understood. He showed the present, and they knew. He showed the future, and they agreed. He dwelt long on Internationalism and its futility. He spoke of the promises made by idealists who promised the moon, forty-five pounds a week, no mothers-in-law, and a pair of twins by Christmas. And his humour was appreciated.

He spoke of the ex-soldiers and how they had been denied; of the selling of England to ideas and hopes generally unattainable. His voice rose and fell, soft yet clear. But he was an artist in his use of it, and the people knew it. God gave few gifts to the Russian, but He gave him a voice.

The sea of faces was calm; the oil had been

good. Over the old ground Ogóne travelled, stopping here and there to show some point of particular interest, sadly recalling the long years of war, and the glory of comradeship. The reason for it all he sketched briefly. He spoke of the struggle for existence and its purpose as conceived by him ; of the desire for betterment, and of a future life. Then, seeing his thoughts were wandering rather from the point, he swung back and spoke of the failure of progress—spiritual progress, and the impossibility of Idealism as conceived by the Government. He continued :

“ There are men who will tell you that a Nationalization of Industry, of Land, even of Children, will bring blessings on the people ; that a new era of life will be opened up to you, and plenty and goodness will be your reward. But I—I have lived long enough to see through it all. I believed it once. I suffered imprisonment for those very beliefs, once ; but now I know I was mistaken. This world is a struggle—a struggle for advancement, and that advancement is of two kinds : the one material, or worldly, the other spiritual. And the great big world we live in holds to things only of the former, and there is no peace. The soul we are given tells us the whole social system of inequality is wrong, and that is because our soul is Godly. Our minds tell us it must be. And the mind is stronger than the soul, for this world is the

sphere of brain, mind and muscle, and but small soul. Our souls should teach us to help others ; but for the most part it makes us only bitter—striving for what we feel is right, forgetting Destiny and the Will of God. The end is at hand ; and, ignorant of it all, this Government would wish the people blind, impotent and helpless. France, in her death agony, is calling for help and we, defenders of humanity and saviours of mankind, shrug our shoulders and watch, fearful lest we soil our raiment, since that raiment has cost money. This Government, that has squandered its receipts so that it is wellnigh bankrupt, still has hopes that out of the blood of others golden sovereigns may drip and fall into our ready hands. Oh, people of the once great England, arise ! Cover not your heads, and think not to find refuge from the wrath of Fate ! Your time will come, and then it will be too late. The drought you feel, the darkness you see, will be nothing to the vengeance that is coming. Salvation lies in action ! Fight, fight by your allies the French, that you may have a chance of falling in honest combat before you are engulfed. Join the volunteers, and if you feel the movement should be national, urge your Government to war. If they refuse and will not listen, it is in the hands of the people to make them. Rise up, free Englishmen, rise up and tell your rulers you do not wish to die in the mire ;

that you have hearts and courage, and that the battlefield is the purest death. To arms, free Englishmen! Show by your courage that this Government is leading you astray; that, at their will, you are to be murdered in your beds, by the enemy or the vengeance to come. Down with the Mark of the Beast before it is too late, before you are tainted with the plague! Famine will rule. Famine is beginning. It is ordained. Save yourselves and fight. There is no other hope. Fling aside your doubts, dwell not in palaces that shall crumble with the dawn, decaying with the rot of unnatural aims. Betraying Nature, making to yourself false gods of wealth or false hopes will bring down the judgment upon you and you will cry for help. Will the Lord God hear you? Cry for rain now, pray for it, and it will not come. The sands are running low. Dark are the heavens—and darker shall be the pit into which you shall sink! In your agony you will call for bread, and there shall be none. You will wail for water, and there shall be none. And you shall pray for forgiveness, and there shall be none for those who worship the Mark of the Beast. Folly has followed folly, and wisdom is wanting. Arise, free Englishmen, and fight, before it is too late. . . .”

Ogóne paused. Not a murmur arose from the crowd below him. Hanging on every word they had listened. His personality held them firm.

His efforts to raise enthusiasm had failed. He had got complete control, but in the way he would not have wished. He longed for the enthusiasm of the Latin ; for the waving of arms, for the shouting ; but they were held in silence. He did not know the Englishman as yet. . . . He had not finished. If he had, he would have had to own defeat. No, he would try again. The pause was prolonged, and his roving eye of a sudden was arrested in its path. Lorna was looking at him. He had seen her at last. It was like new life to him, this steady gaze of hers. In the seconds that followed, he determined to continue. If he could only raise their enthusiasm ! There must be help for France or an Englishman would lose his soul. He turned afresh to his audience.

“Comrades,” he said, “you have heard me well. I have been mild ; I have been simple. You, in listening, are forgetting your lot—forgetting your miserable wage, your drudgery for no reward ; forgetting your unemployed. Remember them now ! Are you going to wait calmly and see this Government dragging the money out of private enterprise to make palaces for their bureaucrats, or are you going to unite and tell them they must do your will—the Will of the People ? In your hands is the fate of the country, to make or to ruin, to cherish or to hate. Go forward and demand your rights ;

cheaper food, work or maintenance, help to your friends and a right to call your souls your own. I have nearly finished and the darkness is very heavy. We shall have to march back soon. Keep close, therefore, to your Union and keep in touch, so that when the time to strike comes you will be able to rise up united and demand your liberty from the hands of the Government that is betraying your trust. I advocate no petty deputations or entreaties, no whining or cringing. I call for action, strong and resolute. For is not that what has been taught you in the past by these very men who control your destinies to-day? Therefore, be prepared. Profit by the lessons of the past. By force you shall win. By force you shall conquer. Awake the heavens to the cry of Liberty! Drag the tyrants from their power! Save yourselves before it is too late! And above all, remember, England for the English! Britain for the British! You have bowed to foreigners too long. Be national; be men! The country, people of England, is yours! Yours to rule, yours to save. Save it, and help! Drive the tyrant Government that betrays you away by force, for that is the only argument they understand."

Ogóne ceased, and sat down on the platform. Cheers rent the air. The crowd was well pleased. . . . Marshals rode here and there and ordered the forming for departure. Banners were picked

up, and bands blew into their instruments or shook them energetically.

Towards the platform, now deserted but for Ogóne and Mr. Middleman, moved an Inspector and two constables. . . . The two were talking. Ogóne, tired and sad, was staring towards the columns of men. One band struck up a tune and its contingent followed after, singing and shouting. Another band began; another contingent departed. The sound of music, the tramp of feet, the shouts of cheerful men and women came through the dark evening. A piece of paper—a leaflet probably—flew across the front of the platform, Ogóne watched its flight, and his eyes saw the police. The Inspector came straight to him.

“I’m sorry, sir, but I have orders to take you in charge,” said the Inspector.

Ogóne’s face showed no change. Mr. Middleman was amazed.

“What on earth for?” he cried.

“Seditious speech likely to cause or lead to civil disturbance, sir,” said the Inspector. “And I must tell you, sir,” turning to Ogóne, “that anything you say may be taken down and used in evidence against you.”

“I say nothing,” said Ogóne quietly.

“This is preposterous, Inspector,” interjected the worthy Patriotic Unionist. “Mr. Bobrishev has said nothing to which exception can be taken.

I never heard of such a thing! Where's your warrant?"

The Inspector showed it.

"All prepared in advance, I see. Scandalous, perfectly scandalous. . . ." Mr. Middleman looked round vainly for support. The dark Park seemed empty; only the distant sound of music from the departing contingents reminded him that a chance of rescue was non-existent.

"But I never heard such a thing! I . . ."

"Come on now, sir. I can't stay here all the evening. This way, please." And without a murmur Ogóne went, leaving Mr. Middleman scarlet with indignation, spluttering and boiling with wrath, helpless with amazement. He forgot to ask where Ogóne was being taken to, or what he could bring him for his comfort. For nearly five minutes he stood where the police had left him, incapable of action. At last he recovered and moved off to the gates. He passed a man on his way out and relieved himself considerably by bursting forth into a thrilling story of the arrest of Mr. Bobrishev, the famous, harmless, clever musical critic.

"He didn't have the face to arrest him during the meeting. Warrant all ready, too—pre-arranged! It's a plot. . . . He waited till everyone had gone," added Mr. Middleman.

"Well, well! I heard him myself, and I must say it was mild, quite mild compared to what

I have heard in the Park. Isn't it dark?"

"Yes, it is. I don't know what's coming to the country. I shall go and see the Home Secretary to-morrow. Do you think they'll send him for trial?"

"I shouldn't wonder," replied the London man.

"Well, I call it scandalous—un-English! Only this Government could do such a thing. I suppose it was a direct order from the Home Secretary."

"I shouldn't wonder," was again the London rejoinder.

"Well, I must be going," said Mr. Middleman, as he emerged opposite the Marble Arch. "I must get the Underground."

"Good evening, sir."

"Good evening, sir." And still worried and flustered, Mr. Middleman dived for the other side of the road.

As to his journey to Hampstead, you may be sure that every one in the compartment knew the sad fate of Ogóne, and sympathized in the way English people do with people who incur the law's displeasure. Old ladies said: "Dear, dear!" young women: "Well, I never!" old men: "Did they, now?"; and young men raised their eyebrows.

Up Fellows Road came our worthy friend, on and off the pavement according to the density

of oncoming pedestrianism, till he reached his home. His wife, opening the door, was treated to a flow of narrative, till, completely worn out, Mr. Middleman went straight to bed and had his supper brought up to him.

Thus we leave him, flushed still, indignant ever, nervous to a degree, dreaming of the words of wrath he would let fly to-morrow on his meeting with the Home Secretary.

Ogóne was then taken to a police station, interrogated, and warned for the magistrates within twenty-four hours. So much for the high ideal, for the endeavour to help, for the realization of the future. And that night, in the little detention cell, Ogóne reasoned it all out, but was unable to find mental surcease. He was impatient. He felt that Lorna would not understand; that the war would come nearer and it would still find him in prison; that somehow he had failed, that he had undone his past work and shaken his own faith to the foundation in the speech in Hyde Park. The moon waved a thin finger across the floor of his cell, but it rested in the far corner. Heaven was displeased. . . . He bent, and buried his face in his hands; his long hair fell forward; the tall figure shook. He rose and paced up and down. He had failed. Failed miserably. He sat on the wooden bed and fingered the coarse blanket. It also was comfortless. Yet, over and above his thoughts, the

God watched, and smiled kindly on the punishment, and Ogóne knew not why. A drunken snore reached his ears from the adjoining cell. So here was the old mixture! This was more like the prisons he knew: the great high Russian prisons, where drunkards and thieves, Socialists and counterfeiterers, murderers and madmen were together. He thought again of those days and how the great counterfeiter had drawn a hundred-rouble note on the wall in chalks, and the warder had gone straight up to it and tried to tear it off as though it were paper. And the murderer of the police chief at Kitslavosk, and his explanation in detail of how it had all been done. This had been before the war. He thought of the revolutionary days, and the pretty little tricks that had been used to extort confessions from Social Revolutionaries whom the Bolsheviks suspected of counter-revolutionary agitation: how they were placed bare-footed in a cell six inches deep in water while the ice slowly formed. Of the branding with irons, and the razor-cutting. Of the cell murders in the night, generally with axes and bayonets; and of the disappearance day by day of men, and the hushed rumours that came in as to how it had all ended.

But no. . . . Why think of all this? This was England. Such things do not happen here. And then the bare walls and the stone floor and the hard roof and the little window and the slotted

door. . . . The ray of moonlight was moving slowly to the other corner of the room. A mouse, caught in the beam, blinked and scuttled away to safety. Prison mice. . . . He had read about them. He had known them in Russia, and seemingly it was the same here. A clock boomed out the hour and was answered. The night was very still and dry ; colder too than for some days past. The early dawn crept on, and the four o'clock hour found Ogóne, fully dressed and covered with the blanket, sleeping peacefully, his head on his arm. The moon had left the room. . . .

The morning came, and awoke the great old city and all its children, who started to bustle about as if existence depended on speed. Carts, the forerunners of the day's work, rattled down the streets, and the milkman went on his rounds. Early taxis crawled lazily by, but work for them was not to be found amongst early risers. Tapping along the pavement came the overdressed female clerks and typists—called 'ladies' for snobbery's sake and the inward delight of Democracy. Slower and more naturally the poor dwellers of slumland crept to their dreary factory-life, to cut up match-sticks for the seeds in strawberry jam, or dye and flavour cabbages for those who prefer gooseberry. Hope or the lack of it was in the heart of each.

And this incessant stream, drawn from the ends

and beginnings of London, strove and strove for gain, in order to keep up with the ever-increasing demands of civilization. The little clerk and his ambitions ; his satisfaction at a rise in wages ; his unbounded joy at being taken into partnership ; his retirement and comfortable little cottage within a mile of all needs of life and yet . . . the meaning of it all :—nothing. The great financier, dealing in millions, looking for happiness and peace of mind, at the end of his days sighs and says : “ Well, at any rate I have worked hard ! ” And the meaning of it all :—nothing.

The poor, grimy flower-seller, born in May’s Buildings and doomed to sit in Piccadilly Circus and sell flowers, begs her pennies and buys her needs ; breeds like a rabbit and dies, pleased if she has stood well by her man. And the meaning of it all :—nothing.

But if, on the other hand, a man or woman, regardless of social or financial success, go their way and do good where it is most needed, and realize their insignificance amid the greatness of things, then there is hope ; for love and faith must have been their guides. And the meaning of that :—everything, and, which is more, a ‘ remove ’ at the end of this life. But the meaning to the world is : Failure.

And so Ogóne was brought before the magistrates, and the pencilled reports of detectives

were produced and the magistrates thought it all very serious. To any experienced listener, it was obvious that by some un-English method pressure was being put against the prisoner. Ogóne looked for friends. The court was strangely empty. The proceedings were short, and he was committed for trial. A solicitor engaged for him politely told him he had no chance, since a Defence of the Realm regulation was held up the Government's sleeve for their own safety in cases like this.

Then the days went by, and Ogóne was shut from mankind. He had no desire for defence, no desire to offer bail. He had heard no word from outside and he knew that forces were working against him. Days passed; certain articles of clothing and toilet necessities arrived from Fellows Road, and hidden in the towel was a note from Mrs. Middleman. It said that her husband had been to the Home Secretary, but could do nothing. He was now suffering from a nervous breakdown, but she hoped he would soon be better. Friends would work for him, but her husband felt that the Government, in particular, was determined on his imprisonment.

So much for that, then, thought Ogóne. He was allowed to prepare his defence with his solicitor and counsel, but he had nothing much to say. He recounted his past, and it was shown him how that could all be turned against him. Com-

pletely resigned was Ogóne when the day of his apparently hastened trial commenced. To a listener, Ogóne was the wickedest seditonist of his day; a breaker of Empires; a maker of bloody revolutions. His defence, handicapped by his refusal to say anything, crumbled and fell. The jury disagreed. The Judge awaited the final decision, and at last it came: Guilty. Ogóne was unmoved. The small audience was apathetic. The Judge was disturbed, and to the surprise of the prosecution, his sentence was but three months' hard labour. The papers, so full of the war ever coming nearer, devoted but a small paragraph to this case of sedition.

Ogóne was removed from London and taken to a lonely prison just outside the Metropolis, given his bath and clothing and, completely resigned, ushered to his new cell. He smiled as the door closed and the lock turned. This was the tenth different cell he had known.

The next morning the door opened and the Prison Governor came in alone. Ogóne remained seated.

"Mr. Bobrishev," said the Governor, "I was surprised at your sentence."

"*Spacibo*," replied Ogóne, looking at the ground.

"It seems that you are not used to these surroundings."

Ogóne raised his head. "I know them too well. I am ashamed."

“ Of your sentence ? ”

“ Of my lack of faith. Of my childishness. I have been worldly. I was sent to speak to the people of God and the prophecies, and I could speak of nothing but physical force and revolution. I have failed. That is why I am ashamed. I missed my opportunity.”

“ If there is anything I can do for you, let me know,” said the Governor nervously, and he backed towards the door. Ogóne did not reply. The Governor left, and told his wife that evening that the new prisoner was probably a little mad, but looked very interesting.

And so Ogóne was left alone with his thoughts, left to hate himself as never before, left to pray that his God would give him another chance.

And after the long night hours had crept and passed, peace came to his mind, and his faith revived. A cold wind blew round his cell. A mouse ran across the floor. . . .

FIVE paces by six—six paces by five. White-wash ; white floorboards, so much had they been scrubbed ; wooden bed ; straw-filled pillow ; blanket ; whitewashed ceiling. Up and down, down and up. Little barred window so very high up, and the great heavy door with the sliding panel and small shelf. On the walls some scribbling, probably done with a nail. Ogoë read the writings, mostly names and dates ; here and there a verse, such as :

“ Here lies me in a bloody cell,
Wish I'd gone to bloody hell.
Curse the governor and the state,
I'm a going clean off my pate.”

Another ran :

“ Scrubbing bloody floorboards,
Cleaning bloody paint,
Makes a bloody convict
Bloody nearly faint.”

High up, and almost out of reach, was a more lengthy effort at verse :

" In the godly bible
You read every day,
Is this pretty fable
' God giveth and taketh away.'
I know it's true, old pard,
And I'll tell you why to-day—
God has given me twelve months hard
And took my soul away."

Ogóne's sense of humour was reviving. He passed round the room, and again noticed a verse apparently written by a gentleman of some learning :

" The night has a thousand fleas,
The day but one ;
But good-bye to your day of ease,
When the night's begun.

The legs have a thousand bites,
The nose but one ;
Yet the itching is set to rights,
When scratching's begun."

Thoughts are your only playmates alone in a cell, and they are often quarrelsome ones too. Ogóne was quieter in heart than he had been in the old days. His nights would be peaceful ; no sudden start would cause him to think that his last hour had come, nor would he be marched under Cossack whips in deep snow that would sift down over the top of his '*sapagui*' and freeze his ankles so that he could scarcely stand. He thought of the dormitory-cells in Siberia wherein, day after day, the only communication

he could make to a newly-sensed friend was a smile or a look of tenderness. And to think that this should be the outcome of his faith and belief ! And after three months it might be too late and his salvation would be in jeopardy. Lorna would lose faith in him. David Tryton would hear of it and might not understand. Poor little Middleman. . . . He wondered how he was getting on ; he, so upset that he must needs take to his bed. No doubt, on the morrow his ‘ hard labour ’ would begin. Perhaps that would take his mind off it all ; besides, it was good to be in the open air. Different from twelve months’ solitary confinement, never feeling God’s pure air blowing all around him. And he had known that, too. Here, he would receive no news. He would not know how near the enemy had got to Paris. He would not know if Brussels had fallen, or if the Belgian coast were occupied or not. And why had God given him such a life ? Looking back, he hardly remembered any peace. It had all been war and revolution, trial and imprisonment. His Destiny had been strife, and although he now despaired of ideals, he realized that they had been the cause of his sorrow. He had made but little money, gained but little fame. His work had not been of the hardest, yet he had helped. . . . He had smoothed over rough places for others, oiled the cog-wheels of life for a friend many a time, suffered for the

people. In all, a certain amount of self-sacrifice and, on consideration, that was worth most. Over and over again his mind came back to his great belief—that God was coming soon and that the world had served its purpose. And the more he thought of it the more certain he became. In no case, in no way, could he find that civilization had benefited mankind. Again, then, he came back to the firm conviction that this life, on the earth we know, is a wheel; that mankind can climb up the spokes, down the spokes or round the spokes, but he can never be worse than the axle nor better than the rim. That the world to come is a higher spiritual sphere; that the past world was a lower one; that no man passes from one to the other till his span of life has rested an incarnation on the rim. And even then, perhaps, an incarnation on the axle meant a lower sphere—and back he would have to go.

And, as he thought, it became so simple, so obvious.

He knew the whole time there was a God. He knew there had been a Christ, a Mohammed and a Buddha, a Moses, a John; and he felt the purest of these to be Christ; but though he saw the humanity of the man, he was unable to see divinity. He was afraid to see it, for it would mean the failure of God, and he was not prepared to acknowledge that. He could not conceive

how so-called civilized Europe could be so taken in by Orientalism as to believe what it did. And he knew the Oriental so well; he was half one himself. . . .

But he must trust in God. His time would not be long here. It was inconceivable that after all his faith he should be put into the background and prevented from helping. . . . He was a servant of God; he would be needed. He knew—he was certain. . . . He must put aside all doubts. He must wait. He remembered the saying of an old friend who had known many prisons: “*Après les nuages vient le soleil: les beaux jours reviendront.*” There were smells all around Ogóne: the smell of freshly-washed linen, of scrubbed boards, of old leather—almost Russian in its intensity; but none of these were comforting. He recalled the smell of an Arab village, of a Turkish *khan*, of an African kraal, of a Greek restaurant, of a camel shelter—and they were all happier smells—smells of freedom.

They came for Ogóne during the morning and he was lined up in the corridor for inspection, with a large company of brothers in misfortune. All eyes were on him and he felt the nervousness a new boy feels his first day at school. Some faces were sad, a few happy, many villainous in expression, some the exact opposite. The men were duly inspected. A ‘hair-cut’ here and there was ordered, and then the prisoners filed

to the right, received their bucket, brush and soap and departed to their several cells in order to scrub floors, beds and doors.

And the first half of a cell is easy enough to clean; but after a while one's knees become rebellious, the brush splutters in one's face and the water runs about childishly. The corners where the dust collects can only be cleaned with the fingers. The bed can only be scrubbed thoroughly when taken from its corner and turned over. Some of them, however, are fixed and the task is therefore easier.

The work completed was followed by repairing clothes and cobbling, while that in its turn gave way to the midday meal. The small basin and the tin mug, the wooden spoon and the chunk of bread. The afternoon was spent in sawing wood at the little mill in the prison square. Other prisoners were taken away, and carried picks and shovels and long-handled hammers for breaking stones. Guards walked at their sides with carbines across their arms. No one spoke. There was only the sound of the saw, the dripping of a tap at the other end of the yard and the shouted orders from the warder who superintended the work. At times in a convict's life the monotony and silence becomes unbearable and the men will shout. . . . Just one loud cry, generally an 'Oh!' The warders are used to it, the other convicts also. It is well understood—and

if not too frequent, calls for no reprimand. Occasionally a convict will faint, sometimes on purpose, in which case he gets extra work to do ; at other times naturally. Ogóne's work was carrying the half-logs to be sawn into boards. The man at the saw snatched them roughly from him. Ogóne looked up and fixed his eyes on the convict. The man hung his head and sighed. Just a poor man whom years of prison had made sour—that is all. His soul was being stifled. His hope had fled. And yet there are still people who would prefer that men condemned to die should undergo penal servitude instead ! Ladies and gentlemen, ask a prisoner which he would prefer, and the answer will surprise and perhaps pain you.

To a prisoner with years of confinement before him, or to a prisoner abroad ever uncertain of his ultimate end, Death is his best friend and is often prayed for.

The evening came, and Ogóne was locked in for the night. On this, the second night of his imprisonment, the same thoughts would surge through his brain ; the same hopes, the same despairs. He thought of the *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, and of how true and wonderful it was. He was not surprised that Oscar Wilde should be so appreciated in Russia, since so many had known the sorrows and heart-rendings of captivity. He tried to recall the lines as he had once known

them. Over and over in his mind recurred the line about 'that little tent of blue that prisoners call the sky.' He could appreciate it as only prisoners can. From his shoe he brought forth a nail he had hidden during the afternoon, and standing on his bed, he wrote, high up on the wall: 'Give, oh give an obolus to poor Belisarius, whom virtue had raised, but envy has brought so low.'

Underneath, he repeated it in Russian. There was no particular reason for doing this, but prisoners do, and prisoners understand. . . .

As the night came on, he thought of the prisoners of olden time. Of Casanova, and of Benvenuto Cellini and his attack on the sentinel. Of Cervantes, and John Foxe and his escape from Alexandria. And of Baron Trenck and his ever-living hope and determination. And back came the memory of his own first imprisonment.

He was glad to think that in England there was darkness in which to sleep; that an ever-burning light which blinds and irritates was not the custom. For in Russia, that light was the great torture, when the prisoner wearied with the anxieties of the day lay on his bed and tried to forget it all. But the ever bright light would burn his lids, or cast patterns on the wall, or show clear the sentry's face through the barred window, and the anxiety would live again.

His former experiences taught him that time

soon passes, and at the end the memory would fade, though very gradually. Here, at any rate, there was no cause for fear. There were no sudden openings of doors and clanking of chains; no thud of rifle butts and subsequent groanings; no sudden cry in the night or subdued curses; no heavy dragging of a dead body across the floor. He thought of leg-irons and the hopeless feeling when they are first put on—that feeling that hope has fled, that all is empty, that the soul is dying. The sleep, and the sudden awakening—the start when cold iron presses on the bare flesh, and the slow realization. The weight on the ankle-bones and the tight strap round the waist. The crack of the whip over the shoulders when the pain has made you lift the chains to save the ankles. . . . Then you drop them once again and shuffle forward, and Dread Heart calls to its God and weeps for relief. The spittle on the finger tips and the soft dabbing of it on the bruised and bleeding flesh—and yet it gives no comfort; and sub-consciously you realize that the most it can do is to rust the iron, and the pain and wound will become worse. But no. . . . Here there was nothing to fear, and the Governor looked kind. . . .

Thus the days went by, and no news was forthcoming. He gathered from the conversation of warders that the war was getting nearer; he heard much mention of Paris, and of aero-

plane bombing. Oh for news! Where was Lorna? And Middleman? And his reverend cousin? He wondered whether Tryton had left. If he had, he felt they would never meet again, and he thought how that it is always thus: that one meets with kindred souls too late, or else just before the paths diverge. It seems that the long trail together is walked only once in life, but that at the parting of the ways many are gathered, and the greeting is a long farewell. Those meetings during the war: the harmony of one or two days, the parting, and the news of death:—he had, it seemed, known that all his life.

And his fingers were becoming sore, his hands hard, his knees red. The lice had begun, and his thumb-nails bore the brownish tell-tale marks. In this case, anyhow, he thought, England resembled Russia.

Some three weeks had passed when one day, shortly after the mid-day meal, he was summoned to the Governor's presence. He entered the room. The Governor's private office, walled with book-shelves, had an air of comfort about it that refreshed Ogóne's eyes. At a sign from the Governor, the warder withdrew. Seated at the table was a woman, her large hat shielding the downcast face.

"I will leave you together," said the Governor as the door closed on the warder. "Time is limited, however; only ten minutes."

He rose to go. The woman raised her head and thanked him with her eyes. It was Lorna. Ogóne, dazed by hopelessness, was visibly surprised. Through another door passed the Governor. Lorna turned her eyes to Ogóne. He stepped forward and kissed the proffered hand. Lorna's eyes were wet, and her handkerchief—scented very faintly with Nubian Poppy—helped her to conceal the pain.

“ How near are they ? Tell me quick, Lorna ! How near are they ? ”

“ Who ? ”

“ The Germans. How near ? ”

“ Crepy, Troyes, Nevers, Arras,” she answered slowly.

“ Good God ! Through Belgium already ! The balance is weighing. . . . Are the casualties heavy ? ”

“ Terrible ! ”

“ And Tryton—David Tryton ? ”

“ I don't know. I have heard nothing.”

Ogóne, who had been standing before the Governor's desk, sat down on a chair, looking straight before him. “ It's coming,” he said, “ and I shall be here.”

“ Shura ? ”

Ogóne turned to Lorna. “ Yes ? ”

“ I'm so sorry about all this. I was so amazed when I heard it. I went straight round and introduced myself to Mrs. Middleman. It appears

her husband is suffering from a nervous breakdown. He had an interview with the Home Secretary and, I gather, lost his temper. It nearly ended in a free fight. Since then I have written to Mr. Akarov, of the Russian Social Democratic Federation, and he has promised to send a protest."

Ogóne looked her full in the eyes. "Ivan Pavlovitch? Can he be alive?"

She nodded.

"Then you still believe in me?" he asked.

"Of course," replied Lorna.

"I was thinking all the time that you had forgotten."

Her glance fell on his hands.

"Oh, Shura, look how your hands are . . . how bad they are! Your poor hands. . . ."

"That is nothing, nothing. Compared with the old days, this is a haven of rest."

Lorna watched for the smile. It was not forthcoming.

"Father would like to see you. He will come down when he can get permission."

"How long do the papers expect France to hold on?"

"I gather, to the very end."

"They won't. When Paris falls, the last round of the game begins. What about the Balkans?"

"There is little or no news. Communication seems to be lost."

"And has the English Government written any more Notes?"

"They sent another one to the International Socialist Congress, but nothing came of it."

Ogóne laughed.

"I now understand their plea for education; yet I wonder, even if they had travelled and spent years abroad, whether they would be any wiser. It is so easy to imagine that races, creeds and castes do not exist; yet how is it possible, when they preach class-war and the difference of class not to realize race-war, and the difference of race? I think of my youth, before I knew any country but Russia, and realize I was the same; but now I know—well, one can but smile. Yet it matters not what they do or say, it is ordained." Ogóne was visibly excited. "And they won't believe, Lorna; they won't! I believe, as the Bible says, that nearly the whole world shall worship the Mark of the Beast; and if the end of the world does not come, then it is the end of Western civilization. Anarchy and Chaos shall follow. Famine will come, and then Death. Let them become Soviets. Let them worship the Beast. This great movement started in ignorance by the working classes shall sweep them away. They created it, but the power will leave their hands and they shall die. The

Famine shall slay their wives and children and the strongest man shall live. Let them do it! They shall cut their own throats! I do not fear this Communism. I welcome it as the greatest lesson of the day, for those that start it shall die the first."

"It is horrible to think of, though, Shura," said Lorna sadly.

Ogóne raised his eyebrows. "I don't know. I think it very good. You say in England that people who make their beds should lie on them. That is the best way to look on it."

"What are the other prisoners like?" asked Lorna after a pause.

"One cannot talk to them, so I do not know; but there are some good faces among them. There are some in whom hope is dead, and others in whom life is dead. I think the former are the saddest. Do you think Akarov will have any success? I have not seen him for years. I did not even know he was alive. So many of us have fallen by the way! I wonder what God will think of people like us, who suffered for an ideal, for the benefit of His more unfortunate children? He will probably think us fools and wasters of our opportunities."

"I don't think He will, Shura. After all, one of your convictions used to be that that was one of the only chances in life which meant anything." Lorna smiled at him.

“ One’s mind wanders in prison, Lorna. One says things of no meaning.”

Further conversation led to the entry of the Governor, who announced that the time was nearly up.

“ You have told him about the appeal, Miss Ridsdell ? ” inquired the Governor.

“ I have,” she replied.

“ I do hope that it will succeed, Mr. Bobrishev, although it is not often that our little Government refuge holds a man of your reputation, and therefore, perhaps we have reason to congratulate ourselves on your presence.”

The Governor was certainly an agreeable man. He rang a bell, and the warder entered.

Ogóne kissed Lorna’s hand.

“ I will come again,” she said.

“ I should like to see Akarov again,” was his reply. He turned, bowed to the Governor and left the room.

Back in his cell once again he felt strangely elated. Akarov, the hero of Dilijan, of Moscow, of Rustov was working for him. The man he had believed killed. The man whose personality made slaves of those he came in contact with. If any one could obtain a release, it was Akarov.

Late that evening, a warder entered and placed a small table by his bed. Without a word he left the cell and returned presently with ink, paper and a pen. Ogóne watched amazed.

"Governor's orders," said the warder, "and see you don't write anything you shouldn't." He left the cell, and the key turned again in the lock. The cell seemed brighter now. This little leniency of the Governor's acted as a spur to a tired horse. Paper and pen. . . . What joys for an artist! Ogóne took up his pen and wrote in Russian :

"Last night I dreamed a dream. It was not a new dream, for I have dreamt it at varying intervals of time since I was a child. In fact, it is a dream I do not pretend to understand, neither can I put it down to a confused digestion nor a troubled mind, for I have dreamt in the far-off days when the sun shone and the world was glad. Let me tell the tale of my dream, for to-night the mood is on me and I have newly been given the wherewithal to write it down.

"I dream, then, that there is a great mist rolling at my feet, like as if I were in the air looking down on great clouds. I am seated in a high-backed chair. There are arms to this chair and there is a footstool for my feet. I should say, 'foot,' for only the one is resting, the other being placed forward on the grey ground. At my feet the clouds roll on—the great mist sweeps and eddies. I am clothed in a white robe. It is indeed very white. Behind me, standing, are people. I cannot see them, neither do I know who they are, but I feel their presence and it is

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Ogóne kissed Lorna’s hand.

“ I will come again,” she said.

“ I should like to see Akarov again,” was his reply. He turned, bowed to the Governor and left the room.

Back in his cell once again he felt strangely elated. Akarov, the hero of Dilijan, of Moscow, of Rustov was working for him. The man he had believed killed. The man whose personality made slaves of those he came in contact with. If any one could obtain a release, it was Akarov.

Late that evening, a warder entered and placed a small table by his bed. Without a word he left the cell and returned presently with ink, paper and a pen. Ogóne watched amazed.

never turn round so that I can see them. In all the many times I have dreamed this dream, I have never turned round so that I can see them. At last I speak. I simply say six words: 'And yet I am not happy.' Then there is a noise, a sound of rushing winds, and coldly it blows. The faces below disappear. The mist rises fast, terribly fast. My robe blows about my legs. I am enveloped in mist. There are many sounds of wailing and winds, of trumpets and of wings, and I awake. I do not understand it. I do not know what it means."

Ogóne laid down his pen, read what he had written and then tore the paper across and across again. He sighed, rose, and began to pace his cell—up and down, down and up. . . .

The thought of seeing Akarov again after so many years made him glad. He had thought him dead long years ago, though during the fall of the last White hope in Russia, his name had been heard again, his presence been spoken of, but never with conviction. There is a strange thing about revolutions and that is how rumour can kill, save, and resurrect. After a time one only believes rumour's killing.

The morning brought its round of toil, its hopelessness. Strange how in prison it is the night that brings hope, and the dawn despair. The whirr of the saw fell harshly on Ogóne's ears; his nerves were weak. He felt irritable. He

began to snatch the wood—sure sign. . . . A man laughed, went on laughing. He laughed softly, then loudly : his mirth became uncontrolled. A warder took him away, laughing still. There were similarities, Ogóne thought, between Siberia and England. One of the prisoners smiled at Ogóne that day ; only a sickly smile, but it cheered Ogóne up, and he smiled back. His fellow-prisoner seemed ashamed ; he looked away.

Thus days passed, weeks passed and no news came to Ogóne. He became depressed. He drew circles on pieces of paper, and devils with great black wings, and strange animals that had never been. He wrote an Ode to a Spider. He had a great argument with himself as to whether he should liberate a fly from the web and let the spider die of hunger, or let the fly pay the penalty of his blindness and thereby save the web-spinner. Instead, he killed them both and cleaned away the web. He watched another fly for hours one evening, trying to find out how it alighted on the ceiling : whether it turned over suddenly or flew on its back. He had a long conversation with a mouse, but the mouse was silly and did not understand, so Ogóne threw his pen at it and broke the nib. He decided that next time he would take the nib out. . . .

He recited a great deal of Pushkin till the warder told him to be quiet. He then sat down and wrote an unpublishable ode on the warder

and his family. Thus appeased, he went to bed. Another night he invented a game of fortune-telling, by tearing out and drawing devices on pieces of paper. He told and retold his fortune many times and was never satisfied.

Away in Jackson's Lane, Highgate, in a little old-fashioned house, Ivan Pavlovitch Akarov, strongest and most violent of all revolutionaries, murderer of princes and autocrats, kindest and saddest of all men, wrote a protest to the British Socialist Government on behalf of the English-living members of the Menshevik and K-D parties. He asked for the release of a brother who had suffered so much for the people, of a brother whom long imprisonment and sorrow had affected so that he was often irresponsible. He promised that the erring brother would never again interfere in politics whilst resident in England. The whole was couched in picturesque phraseology and forthwith despatched to the Prime Minister.

Some days later, a letter reached Akarov informing him that his request had been received and would have due attention. Akarov then wrote to the Governor of Ogóne's prison and asked for permission to see him. This was granted and a day fixed. Akarov had not seen Ogóne since 1914, the year of Ogóne's release from Keshemsk, and often he had wondered of his welfare. As for Akarov, he had been released in 1917 by the advent of Kerensky and had been

fêted in Petrograd and made much of. He had been with Kornilov during the Second Revolution and had gone over to the Bolsheviki. As a member of the Moscow Soviet he had done his best to prevent the wholesale massacre of the Mensheviki, and for this he was imprisoned and sent east. Koltchak rescued him and he fought against the Bolsheviki there. Defeated, he passed through the Red Army and made for Rustov, where he was again arrested and finally condemned to death. He caught fever there and was removed to hospital, where Denikin found him. He was sent south to Poti, whence he went to Constantinople. Supplied with money by his former mistress whom he found in Paris, he left for London and had earned a living since by teaching Russian. Strange, small man, half an Armenian, with those wonderful Armenian eyes, black hair and beard—a wild-looking, sad son of the people.

His was the privilege of watching and waiting : that ghastly vigil that seemed to be interminable. Waiting for peace, for his country to live, for a home to go to. Russians, Georgians, Armenians, exiled because of their love, doomed to wait and go on waiting, while great Governments promise and break the promises within the week. What agony has come to those who stood by England during the first European War. Armenia, Assyro-Chaldea, Greece. . . . Had they been on

the other side, History would have told a different tale.

The promises of Great Britain had raised high hopes in the hearts of little peoples. Those promises had been broken one by one, and on many shores the waiting, homeless folk kept the vigil, yet strange to say, still believed that the promises would be honoured.

One evening, shortly after Akarov's demand, Ogóne found his warder in a talkative mood. He was therefore plied with questions as to the progress of the war.

It appeared that the French had had a great success on either the Aisne or the Seine, but that otherwise things were much the same. The French had retaken Arras too, and were holding well in the North. Ogóne determined to ask for a daily newspaper, but, on second thoughts, feared he might lose the other *douceurs* of his prison life if he asked too much. But this news was certainly satisfactory. It would give him time. He wondered if Tryton had left for France yet. His mind went back to war, and he thought of the soldiers in the trenches. Would it be raining? His glance rose to the window. No, perhaps it was as dry there as here. The patrols then would be spared mud baths and the misery of rain. They would both be using gas. He hoped the wind would be favourable. How many of his relations and acquaintances would

be in the Red Army? How many deserters would there be? and how glad the poor *Moujik* would be to receive French food. But perhaps there was little food in France these days. Would the Russian Commissars be using their revolvers much, and would some of them suffer for it? He pictured a tall Russian, goaded to death by the Commissars, turning and rending his lord and master tooth and nail. After all, did not the Soviet teach that that was the thing to do to all autocrats. . . .

There would be great anxiety in Russia. He pictured the mothers asking the Commissars for news of their sons, and the crowd being driven back at the point of the bayonet. Perhaps one or two mothers would be killed and the excuse would be, they were counter-revolutionaries. It was so simply done in Soviet Russia.

And two more days passed, and two more nights; and the nights were happiest. They are, in prison. . . .

Another day dawned, cold and dry. Ogóne rose and prepared for cell inspection. He looked up at his little window. In the night another spider had toiled and spun. Ogóne stood upon his bed and touched the silvery web. The spider did not move: the cold had killed him. Ogóne envied the spider who had seen his work completed before his death. The cleanliness that prison life had instilled in Ogóne made him pull

away the web and wipe the sticky threads off on the window bars. He gave a great sigh and knelt down for his morning prayer. For several seconds he concentrated, then he began: "*El hamdullahi arbi el hamini*"—a pause—"Lord God Almighty, hear me. Hear me from the fastness of my prison." He paused, and wondered why, when praying, he must needs use such phraseology. He thought it affected; so he changed it and continued: "O God, I've had enough of this. I am Your servant. I have always tried to serve You faithfully. Give me the chance of going on with it. Let me out of this prison as You let me out of the other ones. Strengthen my faith and make me worthy. Help me save the people. Help me turn them to You and the only belief. Deliver me as You delivered Daniel. O God, I can't concentrate this morning; but You know I believe, I believe, I believe. Restore me to Your favour and give me another chance, God. And this I ask through the mediation of the purest man we know of, Aïsa. Please God, please. . . ."

He rose and stretched himself.

After the inspection he lined up for his breakfast and returned to his cell. The morning was spent in collecting the sawn-up wood and bringing it into the prison. It was during this work that he was ordered suddenly to his cell and told there was a visitor. "Some one special," so the

warder said, “ as ’e ’as permission special from the ’Ome Hoffice.” In his cell, he hoped for Akarov. The door opened and shut. Akarov stood in front of him. They looked at each other for some seconds without speaking. “ *Slava Bogou, Alexander Georgevitch !* ” cried Akarov at length. Ogóne rose, the tears standing full in his eyes. They kissed. . . . No words came from either for some time. Then, with a rush, Akarov told his tale and Ogóne his, and each was glad.

“ Ivan Pavlovitch, and I thought thee dead ! Dost thou know we are nearly all that is left ? ”

“ Ach, Sasha, and to think we meet again in a prison ! ” and Akarov sat on the bed and hid his face in his hands, the long black hair tumbling softly over his fingers. He raised his head after a while, and smiled. “ But I have written to Government and I have begged them in the name of the Brotherhood of the People to free thee.”

“ And will they ? ” asked Ogóne.

“ Of course, of course. They are our brothers. They must, or else we are disappointed again. And I can’t bear another blow, I have suffered too much. We have suffered. Oh, God, how our brothers have suffered ! Dost thou remember our Council ?—Leon shot, Ivan Bobeyantz tortured. Haik Georgevitch in Siberia, Kola died of starvation, Mekail tortured. Mariette is gone, no one knows where. Iasha shot, and the other

three—God knows. It is terrible—terrible !” Akarov closed his eyes suddenly and shivered as if a spasm were passing through him.

“So Kola died of starvation. He was a dear creature ! I remember once—but why go over the old days ? They were gay, though full of anxiety ; yet we didn’t realize it at the time. They say Gerka’s heart is broken.”

“Gerka !” sneered Akarov, and spat. “He was a fool. He was blind. Besides, he has a woman’s heart, divided into many parts : if one or two break, there are always several more.”

Ogóne laughed. “Thou dost not ask after my health,” he said.

“No, I can see. Thou art older, much older. Sadder—yes, a little. Thy hair is going grey, too. That’s a silly thing. Look at mine ! It is black, and I am older than thou. But this prison is a good place, and the guards have no bayonets. Where are thy chains, comrade ? Thou canst not be a prisoner without chains. What fools these English are ! And thou hast good clothes.”

“Yes, it is very different,” said Ogóne.

Then they spoke of the days gone by, in spite of Ogóne’s contrarily expressed desire, as all old friends must, and their conversation was punctuated by sighs, the like of which are only known to Orientals. They spoke of the Tsar and were sorry ; though it had once been their ambi-

tion to see him hanging from out the Winter Palace. They spoke of the October Revolution and of the Kerensky *régime* ; of those terrible days with Kornilov outside Moscow ; and of the present war. The news was much the same. The French were holding on, but reinforcements were slowly moving westwards and the stand could only be of short duration. Akarov had no idea of what was going to happen, but he imagined that the English were bound to go to the help of France soon. She was apparently supplying both sides with ammunition and was reaping a happy harvest : all iron and steel works, coal mines and chemical factories were working overtime.

“ I thought,” said Ogóne, “ that these Trades Unions were against war and would not work for such an object.”

“ It is the capitalist system, Sasha,” replied Akarov.

“ But the men can refuse.”

“ Damn it,” cried Akarov excitedly, “ it’s the capitalist system ! Hast thou not been told that is the answer to anything that is wrong ? ” Ogóne smiled. Akarov laughed outright. “ Oh dear,” he said, “ I see thou art disillusioned too. But it doesn’t matter. I shall still stick to the old principle.”

“ And if the Government won’t release me ? ”

“ It is the capitalist system.”

“ And if they release me and I tell them to go to war and they arrest me again ? ”

“ It is the capitalist system.” They laughed together over their joke, but it was a bitter joke to them. It meant the shattering of their idols, and they knew it.

“ We are traitors to the cause,” said Akarov at length.

“ My face is black,” replied Ogóne, and Akarov recognized the term and it reminded him of Van and Bitlis and the days of his exile, when he had stayed with his mother’s people and learnt to know the Turk—a thing impossible in Constantinople where perfect manners, coffee and a State cigarette have always succeeded in deceiving people, including men of intelligence and men of letters. The conversation turned to Turkey and Akarov remarked :

“ They always say, ‘ *Grattez le Russe et vous trouvez le Tartare* ’ ; I wonder what you’d find if you scratched the Turk ! ”

“ Is there any need ? ” asked Ogóne mildly.

Much comforted was Ogóne when Akarov left him. . . .

So that was what had happened to the Mensheviki of his youth. That was the price of their labour exacted by the Communist Brothers of Mankind. . . .

The next day, Ogóne was sent to the boot-making shop and the morning was spent in learn-

ing to make shoes. The silence of the men and the tap-tapping on the leather struck Ogóne as a certain method of driving men to madness. He thought of poor Doctor Manette and dreaded lest his release should leave him in the same mental position as was that worthy Frenchman.

One afternoon the warder in charge of the shoemakers was called outside and the stern shadow of the law was thereby lifted from the little band of toilers. One by one they looked round ; one by one they turned to their work again. Next Ogóne was a little hunchback, certainly the ugliest and most malevolent-looking creature he had ever seen. This little man bent towards Ogóne and asked him how he liked it. The answer was a shrug of the shoulders.

“ What was you nipped for ? ” asked the hunchback.

“ Sedition,” replied Ogóne, never taking his eye off the leather he was cutting.

“ Don’t be bloody funny,” snarled his interrogator.

“ Why ? ” asked Ogóne mildly. The answer was an oath. Another and kinder looking man leaned towards the Russian.

“ Don’t take no notice of ’im,” he said. “ We gets quick-tempered ’ere and this tap-tappin’ gets on yer nerves.”

“ I’ve noticed it already,” replied Ogóne.

" Oh, yer 'ave, 'ave yer ? " growled the hunch-back.

" 'Old yer bloody tongue, Spike," interjected the other. Then to Ogóne : "'Ow is it so many comes to see yer, and hall at hodd 'ours, too ? " There was a sound of footsteps outside. All eyes were on the door. The footsteps passed.

" Wot's sedition ? " asked a young man, at length, in a hoarse whisper. He coughed, and it sounded consumptive.

" Speaking against the Government," Ogóne informed him.

" Are you a Socialist ? " asked another, adding : " I've met some of them coves."

" I am," answered Ogóne.

" One of them talking blokes," remarked the second speaker.

" Ever tried to get out o' this ? " asked the consumptive one.

" No. Have you ? "

" Once. Was a week out, but don't pay. I gets used to it. Besides, I've only six more year to go, and then I'm off."

" What will you do ? "

" Same thing, but shan't get caught next time. Then I'll——" A violent fit of coughing stopped his speech.

" Tap—tap—tap," said a man slowly from the other side of the room. He then turned to Ogóne and grinned. " Tap, tap, tap," he said

again. The hunchback touched his forehead, and shook his head. Ogóne had, however, understood. The warder returned. . . .

Not many days after this, Ogóne was summoned to the Governor's room. Lorna was there alone. The accompanying warder retired.

“ How near are they ? ” asked Ogóne at once, as he kissed her hand.

“ Calais fell yesterday,” she replied. Ogóne's face darkened. “ But I have other news, Shura.”

“ What ? ”

“ You are to be released. Mr. Akarov told me so this morning, and asked me if I should like to let you know ; so of course I came.”

“ When ? ”

“ That I don't know, but the Home Secretary wrote and told him orders would be given at once, since they had taken into consideration your previous imprisonments and your work for the *Internationale*. There, aren't you happy ? ”

“ I can scarcely believe it. I thought they had forgotten all that, for otherwise they might have remembered it before, I should think. It is very good of you to come, Lorna. I wish I could thank you enough for what you have done. One day I will though, I hope. I don't feel worthy of all you do for me. I love you for it.”

“ Oh, it's nothing, Shura. Father wants you to come back to Durham and rest, after this. He is in London now.”

"Rest! I must work now, but I don't quite see how. I expect I shall soon know though. Have you been in London long yourself?"

"Ever since you came here."

"Why?"

"I wanted to be nearer you and—and also nearer the centre of things in these times." She finished her sentence hurriedly.

He sat down on a chair by her side. There was silence.

"And now I can't think of anything to say in answer. I really believe my mind is dying. Can a mind die?" Ogóne paused. Why had he said that? Why was he afraid, afraid of his first instinct? And that instinct had been to take Lorna in his arms and kiss her. There was an atmosphere in the room. An atmosphere, a tension, and it had to be broken.

"I will go now, Lorna. Your news is rather sudden and almost too good to be true." He kissed her hand, and left the room, finding the warder outside, and leaving Lorna surprised and disappointed.

Returned to his work, he found his mind wandering. He was annoyed with himself. He felt he had treated Lorna badly, and perhaps she might not understand. The tap, tapping got on his nerves, more to-day than before. He glanced at the man whose nerves it had ruined. He was smiling over his work, tapping nails into

a sole. Ogóne smiled at a thought that came to his mind : a play on the word, ‘sole.’ He cut his leather unevenly and his pegs broke. Things were going all wrong. And yet he ought to be happy this day. Often he found the eyes of his companions resting on him, wondering at his comings and goings. Somebody sighed. It was the little hunchback. Ogóne felt sorry for him for the first time. He wondered what he had done. He hit his thumb twice in succession. A ladybird walked towards the little hunchback, who was also pegging uppers to soles. The hunchback saw it, and with a sudden movement squashed it flat under his little hammer. Ogóne’s left hand hit the hunchback full on the mouth. The man fell off his stool. The warder moved to Ogóne.

“ What the devil do yer think you’re doin’ ? ” he asked threateningly.

“ He killed that little fly,” said Ogóne, forgetting the English name for it, and pointing to the squashed insect.

“ And if he did, what business is it of yours ? You think too much of yourself, you do. And you’ll just spend the rest of your day in your cell, and I’ll report you.”

The hunchback had risen ; his lip was cut.

“ ‘E ’it me on the bloody mouth, ’e did, the brute. ’It me on the bloody mouth ’e did. Let me get at ’im : I’ll learn ’im ! ” cried the little man, dabbing his mouth with the back of his hand.

"Hold your row and sit down," said the warder. "And you," to Ogóne, "just come along with me and I'll teach you to hit people about."

Ogóne was taken to his cell, and with a parting "I'll see what the Governor's got to say to 'is little pet," he locked the door. Tempers are loose in prison. Minds wander. Little things are so big. . . .

Left to himself, Ogóne flung himself on his bed and wept—for many things and for the lady-bird. . . .

Bread and water was all he was given that day. He didn't mind. Soon he would be free; soon the nightmare would pass.

The next day he was sent for by the Governor again, and there he was told his release had come through, and that no one was more glad of it than the Governor. No allusion was made to yesterday's event. He was given a bath and his own clothes, while the Governor himself handed him his watch, cigarette-case and money. Ogóne thanked him. He felt dazed and subdued. The prison gates opened to him and he walked into the street. Some little boys stared. A dog passed by. Irresolute, Ogóne stood. At length he walked on, sometimes looking round to see if a warder were there. He stopped again. It is strange when you come out of prison, you expect to be stopped, you expect to see a warder at the corner of the street, you do not know where you

can go, you feel you should ask permission. . . .

He knew he would find a railway station somewhere. He was afraid to ask, though. He walked on and on. He began to feel hungry. He remembered he had not thanked the Governor for his kindness.

The station reached, he took a ticket for the West End, and the rapidly changing sights brought him back to a more normal state. He felt for his cigarette-case, and the tobacco calmed him.

That evening he took his place in the train for Durham, having wired his cousin to expect him. He wondered whether Lorna were still in London or had already left. He was alone in his compartment. The train moved slowly out, gathered speed, and braced itself for its long run north. Stations, brightly lighted, rushed past. In the dining-car he looked for Lorna, but without success. He felt he wanted to talk to some one about something essentially everyday.

His companion at the table was a fat, red-faced, cheery soul, very capable of consuming two helpings of everything and washing it down with two glasses of beer. The train swayed more than usual and conversation was started by the man's beer bottle having an attraction for the salt, with the result that they both spilt themselves and amalgamated. Apologies, of course, and conversation as a result. It appeared that the fat, red-faced cheery soul was something very import-

ant in the coal trade, so the meal was accompanied by a lecture and discussion on the actual and what-it-really-ought-to-be-if-it-wasn't-for-etc. price of the said substance.

Meal finished, Ogóne wished a good night to his new acquaintance, promised to see him again at breakfast on the morrow, and retired to his compartment, where the bed had already been made up for him.

Tired, he undressed and went to bed, turned out the light and tried to sleep, but the hours dragged and the train bumped ; and the bump-bump-bump reminded him of the tap, tap, tap, and his thoughts were in a maze. The sleep that was so necessary came at length, and dreams with it ; in which an extra-large hammer wielded by an extra-large hunchback, was gradually squashing him, whilst in the corner stood a tall, dark clock going tick—tick—tick. . . .

WHILE these events in the life of Ogóne were taking place, the second Horseman was riding hard, ever changing horses, ever restocking his quiver. Over fair lands and high mountains, through quiet valleys and between tall trees his arrows sped. And his arrows were strange arrows ; for, on departure, they would change and become the sharp bullet that pierces and breaks small bones ; the shell that rips whole pieces of man and casts them away ; the gas that turns man's body green. . . .

There seemed no respite for the weary world. Driven onward by the laws of Nature, the ideals of civilization fell. The doctrine of Christ, which is the doctrine of Heaven, cannot be used on inferior planes. For the dog there are bones to gnaw ; for the poor there is soup ; for the rich caviare and fruit out of season. How can the poor expect strawberries in January, any more than the rich to eat soup all the year round, with potatoes on Sundays ?

In London, things were little changed. Conversation a little more interesting perhaps, people

a little more kind perhaps—expectant, interested. But everywhere dancing. Dancing for the rich, dancing for the poor; bridge parties for the rich, whist drives for the poor. There seemed no end to it. Football, and again football, and crowds and crowds who paid to watch and cheer, reveling sub-consciously in the bodies of the players, in their muscular strength, in their muscular skill. Love was freer: it was not confined. It took strange forms and became easily tired. It changed about and was lavished broadly on the strong and beautiful, on the weak and ugly, and on all degrees in between. Nerves were bad. Neurasthenia claimed its toll and changed the ordinary into the extraordinary, but never vice versa. Suicides were more common. The first European War had seen to that. A craving for excitement and adventure took strange men to strange places, and they did not always wish to return.

In Paris, the crowd hurried, fearful of the future, but valiant as ever. The cafés were full and the tango was still the rage. Lights were low, and large aeroplanes dropped their horror on sleeping families and gave rest as nothing else can. Little painted women went early to bed, ready for the morning and their labour in hospitals and factories. There was less time for love in Paris. Hearts were hardening and lust received other outlets.

In Berlin, the crowd walked firmly and smiled grimly. They boasted, and sang loud songs in the streets. They waved flags, great red flags with yellow initials thereon, and said to each other: "We are a great people; we shall win; we shall rule the world; we are the Chosen Race—should the end come." And the last words were said low.

In Petrograd, the crowd walked softly, very sad, but with gleaming eyes and thin bodies. At last all would be well. The Germans were organizing the country, and there was food coming. The third Horseman, afar off, smacked his lips and murmured, "I wonder." Bearded and fierce were the Kommissars, and they spoke encouraging words, and there was not one that did not believe his cause just and necessary for the great object—the downfall of Capitalism. The factories were in full blast; and even if the workers did faint and die at their posts, there were always plenty more; and the shells came out of the machines and were dispatched westwards.

In Constantinople, the crowd was entirely masculine and it drank *goosakos*, and smoked *narghiles* and played draughts. It ate *pachlova* with sticky fingers and thereby was able the better to twirl its moustachios.

The Turks smiled softly—all Orientals do—it is the only word, softly. But the smile was sinister and they were very proud of themselves

and their Armenian wives. They spoke of England and her insignificance. They were well fed, and gloried in their Prophets past and present. Sickly Hindus walked about Pera and were glad they were treated as civilized beings and not as inferiors. They were glad they were not in India, for there, unfortunately, the fighting castes had taken into their head to do some looting and throat-cutting; and intellectual B.A.'s do not take kindly to this sport, although they are very good at tennis and cricket.

In New York, the inhabitants shook their heads and wagged their hands, while Moses asked Isaac to lend him a 'quarter' as he had forgotten his pigskin purse. . . . Boston still held aloof and chalked up '100 per cent. American' on its doors, closing the windows tight.

In Lisbon, there was a revolution. They had not had one for some three weeks and excitement had seemed to be on the wane. The new President put his brother in jail and formed a Ministry. He then proceeded to deport his followers in case they should become covetous of the Presidential siege.

In Tokio, the crowd watched and waited, looking south—ever looking south. Determined and clever, cunning and cheerful. Trade was flourishing, but they dealt not in armaments. The soldiers were well trained and the fleet in most excellent trim. Of course they were neu-

tral. The sacrifices they had made in 1914-1918 were not demanded of them now. So much more strength to their elbow. . . .

And in France——

Ever holding on. Town by town, village by village, field by field. Making rivers into arteries, valleys into charnel houses. In the midst of retreats, singing the '*Madelon de la Victoire*.' Brown eyes from Paris, black eyes from Marseilles, blue eyes from Brittany. Civic Guards raised in every hamlet ; every child over twelve employed actively and cheerfully, trying to stem the tide. Rationing was in force the whole country through. Bread was brown, coffee gritty, meat scarce, milk thin ; for the drought was doing its work. In the East of France, Soviets were proclaimed, and a Russian man or woman left to run the different areas. One or two of these were killed ; the punishment therefor was Sovietic to the tune of three hundred men and boys. Communist literature was finding its way into the country and Frenchmen were let through the enemy lines, from east to west, to spread the disease among the troops and civil population.

There were signs that the germ was working ; signs not too small to escape the knowledge of the Government.

Little was known of the fate of prisoners held by the enemy. Many people guessed. . . .

The usual Proclamation was posted throughout Belgium. The same wording, the same blatant conceit :

" It is the will of the formerly oppressed masses of Belgium that the bourgeois State of Belgium become a Soviet of free peoples. The puppet king has resigned. The bourgeois Government has fled. The people are in control and are marching onward toward the New Era of love and peace wherein will be no capitalism, no slavery, no sorrow. Long live the Belgian Socialistic Federative Sovietic Republic ! Long live the Third International ! " And all this was signed by a Kommissar of Belgian nationality but of Hebrew race, the newly appointed President. The man had formerly been imprisoned in Liège for forgery ; he now had his chance of revenge.

The black, yellow and red flag gave way to the red alone with its initials R.S.F.S.B. The lions of Belgium were torn off, and pictures of the Communist apostles took their places. Wallons and Flamands forgot their differences and danced to the tunes of brotherhood that appealed to the masses more than " The Shriek of Bermondsey," " Somebody's Home in Dixie," " Garden Greens," or " Household Blues," which for some years past had been the rage.

The King of Belgium, who was fighting with the remnants of his army west of Calais, knew

nothing of this, and was only concerned in the fight for existence of his last Division. It had been a worse Retreat than 1914, it had been a longer way to come, and deserters had been many. Despair made herself very apparent. It is so very heart-breaking to retire over ground that has known other retreats: one dreaded what would follow the occupation, whilst the rush of fleeing peasants hindered the effective resistance of the rear-guard. Food for the army was terribly scarce and refugee babies died and were left unburied.

In Brussels, Liège, Ostend, Namur, Charleroi, orators held sway and told the same old story, with the same old jokes and the same old enthusiasm. The orators were Russian Jews, German Jews, Belgian Jews, deserters, forgers, murderers, thieves, idealists, idolaters, candle-stick makers (of the seven-branch variety), adulterers, sodomites, sadists and lunatics. No new type, no new idea, no new theory.

A Red Belgian Army was to be formed, commanded by German officers: no saluting, no tyranny, no punishments; but, on the other hand, no disobedience, no idleness, no desertion please, or the Law of the Worker-peasant will be enforced. Paradox, but well understood. . . .

There was only one thing different in this new Republic; one thing that other newly-made Soviets had never had imposed on them. This

was work. . . . The miners of Charleroi were given a twelve-hour day and military law. It was not called 'military'; it was called 'people's rule.' The armies needed coal and Belgians were good miners. Farm-labourers were taken from the Belgian prisoners and set on to farms, with a twelve-hour day and a fixed time-table. The organization was German.

Some did not understand, some resisted; and as there is one law for all in 'Communia,' both kinds were shot. All officer prisoners were shot without trial. Several Burgomasters shared the same fate, and the prisons held the usual assortment of doctors, lawyers, journalists and '*petits bourgeois*.' Students, full of youth's love of power, quickly showed, by bloodthirstiness, their qualifications for the office of Kommissar; and whether it were legal Kommissar or sanitary Kommissar it made no difference. For them was good food and peace.

Enthusiasm ran wild. The "Carmagnole" was a good dance when nerves were hanging on threads. Women took their full share, and many a Maroussa Nikevorovna arose to do justice on her brothers and sisters.

And the little White Belgian front was hard by Boulogne. . . .

In Syria, the Euphrates had been crossed at Biredjik, Meskene and Souria. In the north, the railway had been taken by Tel Erfad, and Djebel

Ahmar was occupied. In Membidj, a mixed brigade of Spahis, Armenians and Chaldeans (fled from Mousol) held the Turk at bay and stood in danger of being surrounded. Only in the south were things better for the French. The enemy were finding supplies difficult to obtain.

But the sound of heat was everywhere: that strange Eastern sound that buzzes, hums and murmurs. The sound that has attracted all men who ever loved desert sands and changing colour. The French supplies of water came up in '*bidons d'essence*' on the backs of camels, as did their ammunition and coffee. Few sights were more welcome in their beauty and utility than the long slow string of camels treading softly on the sand, making towards the reserve lines with their hunchback shadows, their tinkly bells, their rhythmic right and left moving of the head, their long eyelashes protecting sadly scornful brown eyes. At their side walked barefooted Arabs, on sand that blisters European soles after two yards' going.

"Itz, itz," says the driver, poking the brown flank with a palm-stick; and the beast of burden pulls his neck back and treads longer and softer. Behind the string of camels comes the convoy of donkeys, little stumpy donkeys with fat bellies and swishing tails. At the end, a mother-donkey carrying her newly-born child upon her back, tied uglily across; still bloody. . . .

In the little villages, little boys played games with date-stones in the sand, squatting on their heels, their teeth gleaming. An old, long-bearded man was washing in the fountain. Squatting perilously on the edge, his *gondoura* tucked well between his legs, he bathed his face, blew his nose, rinsed his mouth, rubbed his teeth with his finger, wetted his moustache, murmured "*El h'mdullah*," descended, slipped on his shoes, shook his robes and moved slowly off.

A company of the Legion marched down the village street, trumpets blaring. From trellised window there peered down upon them the women of the night before, who for a few brief hours had loved a '*roumi*.'

Outside the Cercle des Officiers, a tall French captain was having an argument with a Jew, while little Arab boys danced round, crying "*Ia houbi : el halouf*."

The Cadi was busy granting divorces and arranging marriages.

The Administrator was busy fining men who had been found wandering about after ten o'clock.

The priest's wives were rolling semolina.

Over the stretches of sand, cloud shadows chased, and colours came and went. Pink loving Blue begat a soft Purple ; Pink loving Green was surprised at the result, and, flying on, fell in love with a Yellow streak and revelled in its new-found Orange.

The palms swayed and hissed a little ; the mud walls blazed in the sunlight and were amazed at their own strength.

With a whirr, 'a French Staff car rushed through the little street, scattered the dust to all corners and headed for the Front. An aeroplane passed overhead and the little dusky Syrians and Arabs gazed heavenwards and whispered "*Walahi !*" The Jews hurried indoors. . . .

In the west, the sun was sinking and the slow-moving shadows grew longer and longer. A call to prayer, and the bowed Faithful spoke with God, rose and stood, and spoke the *Suras* beseeching Allah to lead them in the true path and make their married nights comfortable. . . . Then sitting, the finger moving, then bending, the forehead touching.

Suddenly the sun dropped ; the day was done. Guns boomed, the coffee-shops filled and the story-tellers began, and this is the tale one sang, beating his goatskin drum and droning monotonously :

" On a roof in the village, in this big land, on a roof in the village of Ain-Mahouba, the draperies lay in folds—la, la ; la, la, la " (beating on the drum).

" And on them lay Fatma, the child of Ali Shelali the child of Ahmed Sliman. Born with the eyes of darkness, she could not see the sky. She could not see the Cadi, she could not see the

pools. But she was as fair as the fairest sight to a man, the oasis to the weary, dusty, faithful traveller. And in that night when the stars shone bright, she lay and sighed for love, but the lovers came not, the men came not, for they knew she could not see. And Allah was kind and sent a man, a beautiful man in gold. Mehmed Cherif the wonderful, the beautiful, came by, in a motor-car." (For the singer revered riches and had mixed with Europeans since the first war.) "And she sang the song of the good, beautiful, faithful wife of Mohamed the Prophet of God, of Mohamed the Prophet of God. Mehmed Cherif the wonderful listened and heard the song, the lovely song of Fatma, child of Ali of Ahmed of Iouzouf. But he knew not she could not see, for it was night and the sun had gone and there was no light. Then he called softly, softly, and came close to the house, the great white house where the voice-woman lived. La, la, la; la.

"'Beautiful Fatma, the pure, the chaste, keeper of the knot of thy beautiful heart. I, Mehmed Cherif of the desert, am dying with love, the great big love of strong Mohammedans. Let not the night pass so quickly: ease me of my burden of love.' And Fatma, child of Ali Shelali, heard and was glad and called like a dove, like the little grey dove that picks the grain from outside Hadj' Ali's shop. 'Come to me, beloved, sent by Allah to love the beautiful Fatma

who lies alone to-night.' La, la ; la, la, la, la.

"And Mehined Cherif heard and climbed the high wall that was hot with the day. And his *burnous* was gold and he was *Hadji* and the colours were as those of a lizard that climbs the wall of the house of the '*roumi-bimbashi*.'

"And he came and lay, and no one blew the knot, for he was strong and brave, was Mehmed Cherif, and the tears fell from the eyes that could not see, for Mehmed the beautiful loved her strongly. And they lay, and they lay—la, la ; la, la, la. . . .

"And Baba lay asleep too, and the great fly did not awaken him, for he had made five '*grouch*' in the market, and he had many sheep and goats and donkeys and camels, and he kept a coffee-shop, and he was rich, was Ali Shelali ben Ahmed Sliman ben Iouzouf.

"Then the great Mehmed said words of love, gentle and sweet, to Fatma, and she was happy, but she could not see, for she was without sight. And Fatma said : 'Thy slave will be faithful, only come thou again, come thou again !' And the great Ben Cherif said : 'I come again, for my love is for Fatma, and the night is happy for us.'

"And the great sun was sent by Allah to wake the Faithful, and the darkness went away, and the sand was cold, and the *muedthin* was now awake, for he had slept too, the good *muedthin*

who calls the Faithful to prayer. Blessed of God is the *muedthin*. La, la, la. . . .

"And the light came, the great light sent by God ; and Mehmed Cherif said to his love : ' See thou the great sun Allah has sent.' And Fatma the beautiful, the sightless, looked to the moon and said : ' Lord, I see.' And Mehmed Cherif saw that she was sightless and was sad and said : ' Fatma, Allah will punish thee, thou hast no truth in thy heart that knowest not the moon from the sun.'

"And Mehmed Cherif the great, the noble, killed her with his knife, the shining knife he carried, for he was of the Faithful and she was sightless and she was dead.

"And the *muedthin* called to prayer, and the great, the noble Ben Cherif went down the wall, shining and brave he was, and prayed ; for he was of the Faithful. La, la, la, la."

"*El h'mdullah*," sighed the singer, and moved off.

* * * * *

From England the stream of volunteers continued. Once in France, battalions of English were formed under French colonels ; the other officers being French-speaking Englishmen of war experience.

Dressed in the blue uniform, headed by a special tricolour with a miniature Union Jack impaled, singing English songs, these battalions

were made much of. Three of them had already had their flag decorated—two *Croix de Guerre* and one *Légion d'Honneur*. There was a cheerful fatalism in their step, a great *camaraderie* in their hearts. They were a mixture of good value. Mostly unmarried, mostly care-free, satisfied with their lot, proud of themselves. They invented songs set to music of the common knowledge. They sang :

“ John Bull's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,
John Bull's body and soul are mouldering in the grave,
John Bull's head, body and soul are mouldering in the grave,
But his heart goes marching on.”

As the volunteers rolled in from all quarters of the globe, the battalions asked to be made a separate brigade. Their request was agreed to, and they went by the name of ‘*Chevaliers d'Albion*,’ or more commonly, ‘*Les chiens de chasse*,’ a poor translation of their own name, ‘Retrievers’—retrievers of England's good name.

Oh, they were gay, these adventurers; Crusaders of the twentieth century; and at the bottom of their hearts there burnt a great love—and that was salvation for them.

In London, there was a special French-staffed Recruiting Office, attached to the Consulate, where scenes of great enthusiasm prevailed. The volunteers were entrained at Waterloo and embarked from Southampton on French boats plying to Havre.

Oh, the fun of the landing! the pidgin-French, the laughter, the excitement, the white wine and the coffee! Oh, the pretty little Germaine and Françoise! how they loved this crowd of young manhood and how their prices came down with a rush in one direction and up in all others. Oh, for those nights of temporary love for temporary soldiers in temporary civilian hutments! Then the equipping and the drilling; the sorting, the promotion, the embraces of the Commanding Officer on the cheek of his adjutant. The inspection by the general, by the military governor, by the Minister of War, by the President himself, top hat in hand and evening-dressed. The buying of sweet-smelling soap and hair-oil, the ever-satisfying coffee and the laughter over a first try of some fiendishly sweet cordial. The ever-popular '*état-major*,' drunk through a straw; an omelette, a girl, a knee, a kiss, raised eyes to the ceiling, the move upstairs, the abandon, the satisfaction, the reaction, the return to huts and the whole story told with embroidery.

Then the train; the farewells, the tears, the grinding wheels, the constant halting, the sound of guns, the tension, the apprehension, the detraining, the march, the relief, the front line trench. A night's span would be passed, a night's first duty for France and England's honour; a screaming, rushing, whirring shell, a crash, deep and ear-splitting, and two souls

gathered to rest. . . . What good the love of Germaine and Françoise, the love of country, the love of friends? . . .

Arrived at Durham, Ogóne found his worthy cousin in the best of good spirits. Lorna was expected back towards the end of the week. Many letters were awaiting him. Did he feel well? Was not the prison ghastly? He must tell all about it; it would be so interesting. It was scandalous that the Defence of the Realm Act should have been reintroduced. It looked like a prearranged thing. The pigs were doing well, but the price of things was terrible. The hens were not laying as well as usual, and the milk had scarcely any density; but he expected it would rain soon.

And among his letters was one from Tryton. It appeared that David had joined the French Army, but had been very ill. He was in England. He would like to see Ogóne before he went back. He had a fortnight to go. The letter was two days old. Immediately, Ogóne asked the Reverend Septimus whether he could come and stay at the Rectory. The clergyman would be overjoyed. Gallant boy! . . . So a telegram was sent inviting him to come at once and recuperate. Ogóne walked and walked. He was trying to shake off the feeling only prisoners know: the feeling of being watched, of being followed, of confinement. Suddenly you stop. You have

gone far enough. . . . But it takes you many seconds to realize that you CAN go on if you want to, that you *can* turn back if you want to. Then—you start to run. That is a bad thing to do. And out in the middle of a great lonely field you can scream and scream, and stand on your head if you want to. You do scream too. . . . Nerves, nerves ; prison—using up in a month one year's supply of self-control. But the cows and pigs and chickens are good comfort, and Ogóne watched them.

The quiet of the Rectory was delightful at times and the Reverend Septimus was entertaining and told tales of the parish. At other times it worried Ogóne and he would go into Durham city and watch the people passing by ; see people ; feel among people. Then the opposite : alone with Nature. A nervous wheel, bastard child of Prison Life ; there for always, only sometimes pushed into the background.

His host sympathized, and kept off the subject of the present situation. He took Ogóne to see some of his parishioners—the more notorious in being true types of the great England that was. Ogóne enjoyed this, and for hours he would listen to the tales these old characters told of the days gone by, of the squirearchy and the celebrations up at the 'Court.' He watched the whippet trials, and the excitement and friendly rivalry of the competitors. But his mind would sud-

denly turn aside, and the death-struggle of France would hang like a great cloud in his soul, and sadness would change his eyes.

But for all that, he was waiting. There were to be other events. Megiddo had not begun. . . .

Then Tryton arrived, and by the same train as Lorna. They had sat by each other in the restaurant car, and true to English feeling, had not spoken a word. Ogóne laughed at this.

However, Ogóne introduced them formally at the station, and the conventional load was lifted off their minds. Back at the Rectory, Tryton was soon the centre, and his light-heartedness and the tales of the French Army he told were appreciated to the full.

In the evenings there was music, at which the Reverend Septimus would retire with a perfectly prepared but entirely unnecessary excuse. The old fellow could not stand it. So the three sang songs—gay, Russian, topical, comic; and played music or ragtime according to their feeling.

Tryton was to be there for a week, but as the days passed Ogóne had a sad shadowy feeling that this happy time might be the last time that. . . . But why should he think of it?

“How’s the Roman Empire?” asked Tryton one evening.

“Passed,” replied Ogóne. “We are at the Republican stage here in England. The signs are everywhere.”

" You mean luxury and all that sort of thing ? "

" Yes, and Pacificism. When a country ceases to be able to fight for its honour and principles, the downfall is certain. We have even given up paying people to fight for us. And the extraordinary thing is that the statesmen responsible for taking off the brake are really the biggest Imperialists at heart ; but simply don't realize."

" Supposing you are all wrong," interjected Lorna. " After all, there have been wars and famines and things before."

Ogóne watched the fire, replying :

" There is a possibility that out of the chaos there will arise a new civilization, but it won't be a better one ; and that's a hopeless thought. France won't be able to hold out for ever ; the civilian population would not stand it."

" It seems that the rot in a country always starts with the civilians in a war," said Tryton.

" It makes fighting rather hopeless," Ogóne went on. " Those poor fellows in France, fighting for the safety of their families and those families letting them down."

" Wait ! " cried Tryton. " I've got a beautiful paradox, but I can't finish it. I'll give you the first three lines :

" As I sit in my chair,
In the depths of despair
This paradox comes to my mind. . . ."

I can't go on ! "

"*Augenblick*," said Ogóne, leaning forward, furrowing his brow. Then, very slowly. "I know what you mean :

" If this world should fall,
The end of it all
Would begin at the front from behind ! "

How's that ? "

" That's just what I meant," said Tryton, smiling.

" Listen to the lad ! Why, any fool can make up the first lines, and he takes all the credit to himself ! Now, that's rather a beautiful paradox, isn't it ? "

The silence had brought back the Reverend Septimus. He opened the door slowly, looking toward the piano.

" It's all right ; we are being serious," laughed Lorna. Relief passed over the clergyman's features.

" Come and tell us some tales now, mine host," suggested Ogóne.

" But I've told you all the ones I know," was the protest.

" Yes, but those were Durham ones. What about the tales of the West Midlands ? The tales of your early days as a curate, when you were young and good-looking."

" Ah, the purple wine has tinged the youthful cheek," sighed the clergyman.

“ ‘And there is no health in us!’ ” added Ogóne.

“That kind of remark, Mr. Bobrishev, aimed at your elder, is strange in one of your culture.” The Reverend Septimus bowed in his chair.

“Prison life, prison life. You forget I went to chapel every day.”

“God help the Church for the loss of the lamb!” murmured Tryton.

“Sheep, sir, sheep!” said the clergyman. “Well, if you are very good, I will see if I can remember a tale or two; but I must have a glass of port.” He rose and helped himself.

“And us?” asked Ogóne.

“You don’t deserve it!”

Lorna looked at Tryton and nodded invitingly toward the decanter. Tryton rose and filled a glass.

“Starting young!” said the clergyman, looking out of the corner of his eye. “Well, let me see. . . .” And without more ado he began, speaking the dialect like a native.

* * * * *

Having kept his audience amused for a good hour, the Reverend Septimus yawned, rose, and refilled his glass.

“There is a lot to be said for English humour,” said Ogóne, smiling. “In the country it never seems to be forced.”

“It’s pure mediæval humour, my boy,” added the clergyman, sipping his port.

"Yes," continued Ogóne, "it expresses the heart of England; the old heart that still beats. . . ."

Their quiet evening finished and the morning followed. Some two or three days more of tranquillity. No cares, a future dim and exciting, friendship, all happy.

Then Tryton left for London, and Ogóne promised to dine with him the night before he left England.

The departure of David cast a gloom. The clergyman had found him cheery, Lorna had found him sympathetic, and Ogóne—well, he had found him all these things long ago. He began to wonder whether it would be worth while having known him.

France, War, Death,—Void. . . .

Lorna and Ogóne were thrown much together and the latter found great peace and comfort. One night in the firelight, on the sofa—(a very English one)—they were talking more seriously than usual. A tension, uncertainty, quietness was in the air.

"Well?" from Ogóne.

"When is it going to rain?"

"Lorna, don't be so sickly. Weather! What a thing to talk about."

"Sorry."

He put his left hand on hers, flat. . . .

"Your hands are cold. Worried?"

"No."

"Not very talkative to-night. Do you hate me?"

"Why on earth should I?"

"I don't know. Only something to ask. Supposing you ask me something for a change."

"I did. I asked you when it was going to rain."

"Coward!"

"Why?"

"Well, perhaps not." There was a pause.

"Lorna, why are you so nice to me?"

"Why shouldn't I be?"

Ogóne removed his hand. "I don't like icebergs or marble statues or teddy bears to talk to. Are you afraid?"

"Of whom?"

"Yourself."

"Perhaps."

Ogóne smiled. "Melting a little?" he said, smiling.

"Silly!" . . . Another pause.

"Lorna?"

"Yes?"

"What would you say if I kissed you? Would you be furious?"

Her voice dropped. "I don't know," she replied, simply.

"Then I won't."

She raised her eyes quickly to catch his expression.

"Are you annoyed?" he asked.

"No." Again a pause.

Ogóne continued, speaking slowly, hesitatingly :

"There comes a time, Lorna, in all friendships between people of temperament—real people, natural people—when that friendship has either to be made permanent or broken. Do you agree?"

"I don't know!"

He went on: "There are ways of making it—many ways—of making it permanent; or rather, sanctifying its permanency. To me, there is one that is better than all others. . . . I asked you just now to make ours permanent, and you refused. . . ."

Lorna looked up. "I didn't, Shura," she said simply.

"Well?" He looked at her, then turned his gaze to the fire, and went on: "It is natural expression. It is in every one of us, only in some it has been stifled, in others ruined by excess, and in others completely put aside."

He suddenly rose abruptly and took a cigarette from his case, standing back to the fire.

"I don't know why I am talking like this to you, at all."

He laughed, and lit up. Both were uneasy. Ogóne wanted the climax to such an evening. Lorna was not understanding the motive. Hoped, but was not certain, and was therefore afraid to

give herself away. Consequently, there was a longer pause than usual. At length :

"Have you ever been in love, Lorna ? "

"In the past ? "

"Yes."

"No."

"In the future then ? "

"How can I tell ? "

"Well, in the present. Are you in love now ? "

"Perhaps."

"Now I understand then." Ogóne looked at his shoes.

"No, you don't."

"I'm sorry I asked you to kiss me. I didn't know there was—anybody."

Then a strange thing happened. Tears rose to her eyes. She blew her nose. Ogóne never moved his downward gaze ; he had not seen. Lorna suddenly rose.

"I must see whether father has come in yet." (Her father had been tending his flock later than usual.) And she left the room, keeping her head turned away, in the way women do when things are wrong and have come to such a pass.

Ogóne wondered ; wondered why she had never mentioned it before. He was annoyed he had not approached the question differently. Another regret then. . . .

Dark cold night outside. No stars. Oh, for the southern sky ! Warm, buzzing, dry, dry,

dry. . . . *Café maure* and hard-baked mud. Camels, goats, sheep, wool—sand. Little warm winds, music, beating of a *teboul*—tum, tum; tum, tum. Monotonous; yes, certainly. Better than cold. No trees; better than leafless ones. Palms, cactus, prickly pear. Very prickly—like bees' stings, but kinder. Fruit—like bananas. Pomegranates from Syria. Tasteless? French soldiers eat them. War——

Sequence of Ogóne's thoughts: rapid, but happy—till the last: French soldiers eat pomegranates. War——

The front door opened. The Reverend Septimus had come home. Lorna must have gone straight to bed then. He thought he had not heard his host come in earlier.

"Well, well, what a cold, miserable night! Looks like rain," said the clergyman, coming to the fire. "Get out of the light and let me warm myself, you lanky Rooshun! Where's Lorna?"

"Gone to bed," replied Ogóne. . . .

On the morning before Ogóne's departure for London, where he was to wish God-speed to David Tryton, the reverend clergyman suggested a walk.

The two passed through the little village where littler boys played with their whip-tops, or rolled greasy marbles down the path. At the butcher's shop, filling the doorway, thumbs in apron strings stood Mr. Rumper, portly and cheery as become

all butchers who know their trade—and prices.

“Good mornin’, Mr. Ridsdell. Rain keeps off.”

“Yes, yes. Bad for trade, I expect.”

Mr. Rumper winked. “Bad for some,” he said.

“Meat scarce?”

“A bit, Mr. Ridsdell.”

“How’s the wife and children?”

“Like their father, bloomin’, very bloomin’.”

“That’s good. Good morning to you, Mr. Rumper.”

“Good morning, Mr. Ridsdell.”

On down the village street. A woman crossed towards them, shawl-covered, poor.

“Well, Mrs. Abel, and how’s the baby?” asked the clergyman cheerfully.

“Not so well, thank you, sir. This weather don’t seem to suit ‘im. Gettin’ thinner, sir, much thinner.” Then, with a sigh: “I expect ‘e’ll be followin’ the others soon!”

“Where?” asked the clergyman injudiciously.

“To the graave, along o’ the others. Four on ‘em I’ve buried; four little uns.”

“Tut, tut, Mrs. Abel. He’ll grow up and live to be the comfort of your old age.”

“‘E won’t, sir.” And Mrs. Abel hesitated, and went on her mournful way.

Passed the little saddler’s, and turned off towards the open country. Overtook Miss Pringle, the village schoolmistress, singer of sentimental ballads, worker on all committees, useful or useless.

"Fine day, Miss Pringle."

"Indeed so, Rector, indeed so. I wanted to see you very badly. So lucky we met, wasn't it? Yes, of course. Well, as I was saying, we are getting up a little concert soon, and thought it would be so delightful if you and Miss Lorna would sing us a little something. Just a little something, no more. I'm sure I wouldn't think of worrying you. Then there's poor Mrs. Tenny who is so worried. I've done all I can to make her see sense, but it is so difficult. She insists, Rector, that her baby's cold was a direct result of the Holy Baptismal Service the child so happily enjoyed last week. So silly of her! Then, oh, this is very dreadful, Rector. I can hardly bring myself to tell you, but do you know, young Jane Meachum has had—what do you think?"

"I can't imagine, Miss Pringle."

"—A baby, Rector! I assure you, a baby! But what is worse, Rector, what is much worse is that she does not know who is the father! Miserable girl. I don't understand it. It's dreadful!"

"Dear, dear!"

"I hope you will make her see her sin, Rector. And I hope she will not put her foot in God's Holy Church until she is washed in the precious Blood. It's too dreadful." And luckily, coming to the school-gate, she turned off abruptly. "Good morning, Rector. So nice to have met you."

"Good morning to you, Miss Pringle."

The two passed on. Clear of the school, they looked at each other.

"*Wallahi*," said Ogóne.

"I think she must be mad," said the clergyman sadly. Ogóne laughed.

"It doesn't seem," said Ogóne after a time, "that the pinch is being felt very badly."

"Oh, it's bad in the towns, bad among the poor in the towns. Very bad."

Nothing was said for some yards.

"Shura," said the clergyman at length, "I want to talk to you before you go to London about something rather delicate. Er—Lorna came in the other night to my room and spoke to me more openly, more sincerely than she has ever done before. You know, of course, that since Mary died and John was killed we have rather held together. We've been rather more dependent on each other ; so much so, that Lorna is all I live for. Her happiness should be and is the first consideration of my life. She is very sensitive. I gathered that—well, in short—she hoped that you had feelings, I may even say, of love for her. The other night, I understand, you approached the subject, and—well, there was a misunderstanding. Was this so?"

"How do you mean, exactly?"

"Well, it is very difficult to explain. I'd better put it like this : Are you in love with Lorna?"

"I am very fond of her."

"But I understood that, at many different times, you led her to expect that you were. Understand, Shura, that I am only trying to help you both. Lorna seems unhappy."

"Is she fond of me, then?"

"I may say more: She is in love with you."

"I am very, very fond of her, but——"

"Well?"

"I— don't know yet. It is very difficult. I honestly never meant——"

"Then you have no intention of asking her to marry you?"

"I may have. I am waiting. I think it would be better if I spoke to her."

"Good, good. But that, as far as I can see, is the situation from her standpoint."

"Would you be pleased?"

"Yes, yes, I would. But I should miss her. Oh, how I should miss her! She's been my all for so long now. You understand?"

"Of course. Leave it then. I will speak to her. I must decide. There is no woman I have ever met who has meant so much to me as Lorna."

"I am glad. I trust you implicitly, Shura. And if you don't feel all that is necessary for a happy, a really happy marriage, don't go on with it. It will only pain you both unnecessarily, won't it?"

"You are right. I have felt it growing for so long now."

So they walked on and the conversation changed. The Reverend Septimus became more cheerful again and told tales of Miss Pringle and how she used to sit in the front pew with her mouth wide open in admiration, till the clergyman felt inclined to shut it with fast-hurled bell, book and candle.

And the wind was low and chilly, the blue sky looked cold and far away. The air was silent. Afar off barked dogs. Nearly the only other sound was the tramp of the feet on hard English ground, the dry crackle of twigs as the feet split them in twain.

Silent—therefore sad ; cold—therefore strong. Sad and strong—England of that day. But strong only at home. Abroad, hot—therefore lethargic ; humming and buzzing—therefore uncertain. Uncertain and hot—England of over the seas. What was left of it, only. . . .

What would be left of it ? London for Nineveh. Britain for Byzantium. There is an end to all : Empires, civilization, love, hate, men, women and children. John to be called Benoni—born of sorrow ; when the crash comes, when the crash comes.

Then Ogóne left for London, and he had not spoken to Lorna.

It was the same restaurant, this last night of

David Tryton's, before being engulfed. They ate in silence for some time. Tryton seemed tired. At length Ogóne broke the stillness :

"You seem despondent, David. What is it ? "

"Thoughts, thoughts ; buzz, buzz. . . ."

"Why didn't you put on your uniform to-night ? "

"I don't want to look more of a fool than usual."

"In that kind of mood to-night ? Hating everybody ? "

"Pretty well. Look at that horrible-looking creature over there."

"Well, what's the matter with her ? " asked Ogóne.

"Why should she show the world the glories of her short-cut to wealth ? "

"You're too hard on the poor woman. She is earning her livelihood either after her ideals or of necessity."

"And that decrepit old sinner with her. Mutual parasites ! "

"We are all much the same. There is an Eastern proverb that you should remember. Are you listening ? Right. Pay attention then : 'In the Brahmin gifted with knowledge and modesty, in the ox and the elephant, even in the dog and in him who eats dog, wise men see the Godhead.' There. . . ."

"Am I to see the Godhead in that old parasite and his mistress?"

"It's there all right. Even a whore has had one great love in her life. And, for all you know, her lord and master may have done more good in the world in God's sight than a hundred loud-speaking moralists. I'd put a thousand acts of carnality against one of kindness before the balance would weigh against a man: provided, of course, the carnality brought happiness, and injured no one."

"Behold the Prophet of Free Love!" Tryton slightly mocking.

"No. Yet it is strange to realize that the fundamental reason for the opposition against having more than one wife is nothing more nor less than jealousy. I wonder what our tame idealists, who intend to change this world, will do when they come up against this question."

"All the trouble in the world comes from Jealousy. Wars, Revolutions, everything."

"'A Daniel come to judgment.'" Ogóne slightly mocking.

A pause.

"It's all very hopeless."

"I'm sorry for you."

"Thank you."

"No; I don't mean in that way, I mean for your life. Had you lived last generation, you would have known happiness sometimes. But

I feel that all your generation has had no youth. When you should have looked to the making of friends, you found death on the threshold. They were snatched from your grasp. When you should have had Youth's roughness softened, you went to war, and became hard and brutal. When you should have started your career young and full of energy, you were old and tired and, in many cases, broken physically and mentally. It all seemed so empty : so dull and lifeless. And now it goes on. There is no rest for you. The secrets have been opened too soon. The future can rarely equal the past. Ambitions were quickly achieved and you have had to find others, and these now take second place. It is hard to be happy without ambition. So you are old and bitter, intolerant and tired. That's why I am sorry for you and for your generation. Understand ? "

" Yes. I think it is true. A lot has been talked about the war doing good, but I don't know. Some people it did undoubtedly improve for the time, and it was strange how, in France, the best was so appreciated. But it all seems to have faded away."

There was another pause, and Tryton went on : " I fell in love last week."—Ogóné raised his eyebrows—" But I fell out again. Why does one do that ? "

" Generally trying to fill a gap, a void in your

life; and it can be filled in many ways. By sympathy, for it needs that. By beauty, for that is the expression of ideal life. By comradeship, for that is the lifebuoy of a wandering ship."

"Some people don't seem to have that gap."

"Some people fill that gap with dirt, that's all," Ogóne replied.

"Well, anyhow, there it is, for better, for worse; and I'm off to this bloody war and shall probably not come back."

"Probably not."

"You don't seem to mind."

"Perhaps not."

"Brute!"

"Another proverb for you—Russian, this time: 'Never spit in a well whence some day you may want to drink.'"

"There won't be time to be thirsty."

"*Modjyet bwit.*"

"Well, I don't care."

"That is the only attitude with which to go to war."

"I should like to be buried in England, though."

"Why such sentiment?"

"Oh, for Christ's sake, let me keep something! Do you know, I'm not thrilled as I was during the last war. One knows too much what to expect. I wish we were dining in Paris, where the air was full of the same spirit. Here one feels

so out of it. I hate these people who sit and eat and don't care, don't think. I should like a bomb to burst in the middle of them. I should like to blow the British Government sky high."

"White anarchist!"

"Why?"

"Because you've forgotten to blow up the King as well. But why hate this Government? It is no worse than any of the others. There's been a Liberal Government, and what did they do?—Disarmed England and went to sleep. Result:—1914. There's been a Coalition Government, and what did they do?—Had the world at their feet in 1918, and played 'Crown and Anchor' with it, losing all respect, all power, all force. There's been a Conservative Government, and their sole achievement was to restore Honesty of Purpose to its throne. That, I own, was something. But this Government has done wonders. It has ensured Peace at any price. It has given the great railways and the land to the people —"

"And has ruined the country!"

"No, no. It has only carried that on. Hurried it a bit. But it's burying the People with a silver spoon in its mouth. It's giving the people five minutes' idealism before they die. That's something. It has purged the Ministries of incompetence. It has taken the plums from the rich to give to the poor. It has got to hurry up and

give the plums round before the poor are dead ; yes, I'll grant you that. But I fail to see how it is worse, as a Government, than its predecessors. It's a wonder to me, though, how it has kept together. It's such a mixture of people. Trade Unionists of the old school who are really Tories ; dissatisfied Liberals who are tea-totallers ; cranks who are lovers of power ; and true idealists. In the past, we had Governments of Tories who thought more of fox-hunting than of the people ; Liberals who thought more of Peerages than even Jews do ; maniacs who dressed like dolls and spoke with a foul Oxford accent. Scarcely any difference, really."

" Oh, all right. Stick up for it ! I thought this Government had put you in prison."

" Prison, for a Menshevik, is the greatest compliment a Government can pay," said Ogóne, drinking his coffee and smiling over his cup.

So they went on talking. Both unsatisfied at the trend of conversation. Both trying to be conventional and cold, though they might never meet again. Tryton in an irritating mood, Ogóne encouraging it, because he thought it best. . . .

Coffee then ; cigars ; blue-grey wisps of smoke. Long, steady ash. A liqueur—any kind. Inhale the cigar, raise the liqueur and, as you drink, send the clouds of smoke into the glass. Close the eyes ; shiver. The only way to drink a liqueur. Taught by a strange Englishman living in the

Welsh Hills, who read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. . . . and castrated lambs for a living, with his teeth. Nipped in the bud. Like so many other good things in this world. Not much difference in anything. A matter of taste. Round and round, or up and down. Few go straight. . . .

What was Tryton thinking of? A life, hastily run, crammed very full. Tired; too much of it. Love. Yes, it had played a part; though not so much as he could have wished. Hate. Played a part also. Regrets. God, yes! Any amount. Missed opportunities. Any amount. Seized opportunities. Probably; but all forgotten. Cruel Fate, to remember only the one. His mother. Never understood. Never suckled him. Strange woman. Her fault. Cannot expect too much under those circumstances. His father. Dead, long long ago. Bearded, tall—no more. He had been too young to remember. Ogóne. A lot of things. Awed slightly. Attractive, clever; just a passing ship. . . .

What was Ogóne thinking of? A life, cosmopolitan, full of violent loves and violent hates. Tired. No, just waking up, getting ready. Regrets. Too many to count. His mother, father, relations. In the past; obscured. Not much love lost. Milk question again, perhaps. David. A sigh. Meaning much. Lorna. Yes. . . .

"A theatre, what do you say?" asked Tryton.

"Right. Where?"

"Let's go out and see. Waiter!"

"Sir?"

"Coats, bill, quickly." They waited, still smoking.

"Blast that waiter, why can't he hurry up?" Tryton was impatient.

The bill came.

"This is mine," said Ogóne, and paid. They put on their coats and left, bowing to the manager as they passed out.

"Well, I suppose that's our last meal together," said Tryton, stepping out briskly towards Eaton Square.

"Rather a dreadful thought. It's only just struck me, now you've put it so finally."

"What shall we go and see?"

"A music-hall will do."

"Victoria Palace, then. It's nearest." And they turned off to the right.

At the theatre they arrived late. A funny man with a red face was singing a song. The audience seemed delighted. The funny man made Ogóne laugh. Tryton sat glum. Next, a sketch. Bert Coote, delightful as ever. An original. Followed by the Gresham Singers. Old songs of old England. There was music in England then. "Drink to me only with thine eyes." Sheer melody. "John Peel." Hunting. No, not red-faced squires. There is no music there. This is the song of the countryman who watched from afar. Who

heard the horn, and saw the colour come over the hill. They sang yet another : " Robin Adair." Light, zephyry music : melody. Should be played on a spinet. Piano too harsh. It had the required effect. Tryton spoke.

" Afraid I'm terribly dull to-night. I can't help it."

" I understand."

Interval. Men standing in the promenade, all eyes. Looking, seeking, hungry. Eyebrows. Strange world. . . . Little painted lady in heavy fur coat, butting through the crowd. Full of confidence. Good luck to her—if she wants it. . . .

In the bar, curiosity. All eyes. Sideways leaning. Crossed feet. Cigars and pipes. Nauseous. Thank God, no spitting as in U.S.A. Ogóne and Tryton watched from a sofa. Fat little jeweller, diamond rings. Tall greasy man covered in spots. Lewd woman drinking a Guinness. Hair very high. Huge comb. Many friends. " Isn't 'e a scream ! I larfed till me sides ached. Chronic, I calls it ! " and she spluttered in her stout. Poor miserable man beside her, drooping moustached, laughs too, and puts his arm affectionately round her full waist. No shyness there. " Take yer 'and away, yer Nosey Parker ! " Bell rings. Tabs up. More turns. Always good at the Victoria Palace. Always full. Many Guardsmen there, tramping in the

gallery. Promenaders, tired of standing, find seats upstairs at half-time. London of that time. Rome before the fall. Not much difference. The last turn. Musical medley. Fat woman in tights, slashing bells. Thin assistant, very mincing, tapping bells. Sweating man hammering a xylophone. Hard-working trio. Manchester next week. Hippodrome, Brighton, after that. *Quelle vie!* The end. "God Save the King." Hats on the while; tramp out. Push and shove.

"Some to women, some to wine,
Some to wealth or power incline.
Proper people cherish swine."

Herd them out. All sorts and conditions.
Brothers and sisters in God.

"A whisky before bed, David?"

"Right!"

They hailed a taxi and gave the address of Ogóne's hotel. Upstairs, they drank and were full of moods. Not much talking. Restrained. . . .

* * * *

Not much as a parting after that. Tryton was to leave at seven the next morning. That night Ogóne lay awake.

It had been a funny evening. Unsatisfactory and sad. He had been very fond of David, who had come into his life at such a stage; and now he was gone. To-morrow he would be in France—he felt the chapter was closed. So many

people had come and gone in his life, and some had gone taking away a little part of that which sentimentalists called his heart. Some people have pieces taken away so often that soon there is nothing left, and the heart is empty, cold and cynical. That's the reason for much cruelty and hate. He thought of the free-and-easy continental way of making friends, and the preliminary introduction needed in England.

Mind wanders quickly in bed at night, when sleep is afar off. Durham loomed in and claimed attention. Then Lorna. . . . He was worried about it all. He was not certain whether he loved her enough to marry her. He could not trust himself. He had been afraid to speak to her. The situation was delicate. He would stay on in London for a time and try to make his mind up. He was afraid he had hurt her, unintentionally. He tried to imagine himself married and settled down. It seemed impossible, but he had known it happen in others. The most rolling stone must stop somewhere; and for him, that somewhere could be Lorna. As the early, early morning wore on, sleep came; and with it a dream, confused and odd.

He dreamed that he was standing in a dark place, whilst all around him gigantic cliffs reared their black rocks ever upward and upward to where there was no sky, only faint dawn. He looked down. He was standing in long grey

grass that rustled and rustled wickedly. It seemed as though full of slimy things and horrible.

A man stood by his side, slightly behind. He spoke.

"Look!" The man had pointed. At Ogóne's feet there lay a great inky pool and from above there fell drops, great big raindrops that splashed and made circles and eddies in the water. Drip, drip, drip.

"What is that?" asked Ogóne.

"For every sorrow, for every sin, the world weeps. Listen! It is weeping!"

Drip, drip, drip. It was very cold and Ogóne turned away.

"Where is this?"

"This is God's heart," replied the man.

"Why is it dark?"

"Because there is no light."

"Where is the light?"

"Underneath."

"What has made it dark, then?"

"It is filled with trouble."

"Is the grass trouble?"

"The grass is trouble."

"Give me a spade. I want to see the light of God." Ogóne was weeping.

"What's behind these walls?" he asked, as the man did not move.

"Space, and more space!"

"I want a spade. Give me a spade!" The

man handed one to Ogóne. He started to dig, but the spade turned into a snake and disappeared in the grass, ever rustling. Drip, drip, drip.

"You have no faith!" mocked the man.

"I have, I have!" cried Ogóne, and falling to his knees, he began to tear at the grass and the wet, slimy earth.

"Here's a spade," said the man, and Ogóne took one from his hand. He worked feverishly.

"Who are you?" asked Ogóne at length.

"The Devil," replied the man quietly.

Ogóne started back. "Then this is——?"

"—Hell." The man smiled.

"Why am I here, then? Oh, why am I here?" Ogóne's soul was wrung.

"There is really very little difference between Heaven and Hell. Only threepence on the roundabouts and threepence on the swings."

Drip, drip, drip. . . .

Ogóne awoke, the tears in his eyes. He prayed:

"O God, Whose servant I am, strengthen me and use me for Thy glory. Forgive me for the evil I have wrought. I am Thy servant, God. O God, hear me. . . ." and he slept again.

And he dreamed. He dreamed he was walking in a grey place, and there were no trees. Grey all around, along a little grey path, and by the side of the road were bodies. People every few yards, crouching, weeping. And as he passed, the one cried: "Heal my wounds!" And

Ogóne looked, and he saw an old man, ugly and wrinkled ; and he passed on.

And another cried : “ Dry my tears ! ” But it was a woman horrible to look at, so he passed on.

And another cried : “ Help me rise ! ” and he was a leper. So Ogóne passed on yet again.

Then he heard a voice that cried : “ Save my soul ! ” And he looked, and it was a young girl fair to look on, and Ogóne stopped and said :

“ What can I do for you ? ”

Then the girl smiled ; and as he watched, she changed slowly, slowly, till never had Ogóne looked upon a being so loathsome ; and he drew back. And a voice from afar off cried mockingly : “ There is really no difference. Only threepence on the roundabouts and threepence on the swings ! ”

And Ogóne understood, and ran back along the road and looked for those who had called on him.

“ O God, I want to help ! I want to help those people that were here, but are gone ! ”

And a voice answered :

“ You have learnt ! ”

The greyness blew around him, and his pillow was wet with tears. The man who had tried should have his chance, now he had understood.

. . .

IN the East, British apathy made people laugh. There was really something very gratifying in watching the greatest empire in the world dwindle and dwindle away. Besides, it was interesting to realize that a country that would not fight thirty miles from its shores would certainly not trouble to protect its colonies thousands of miles away. These conclusions were drawn in official circles in Tokio, but the British Representative heard nothing, saw nothing.

The Japanese Fleet was holding manœuvres north of Australia when the fresh orders arrived. They then steamed home. Reinforced with more ships and large transports that carried soldiers, they then moved south; off for extensive manœuvres at an unknown destination.

Fishermen and coast watchers, lovers on the shore, were surprised to see, one morning, such a large fleet steaming south along the east coast of Australia.

So the British Fleet is on the move! they thought.

Some miles outside Port Douglas, two cruisers stopped: the rest steamed on. Outside Innis-

fail ; outside Hinchinbrook ; outside Port Denison, ships stopped :—dropped all down the Great Barrier Reef to Brisbane.

Outside Brisbane, Raleigh (where the silver comes from), Newcastle, Sydney, ships waited. It was the afternoon. . . . It was the evening. . . . It was the night. Two days.

In the afternoon of the third day, ships were outside Melbourne ; and then it began.

Without warning, the bombardment fell, heavy and sure. The Australian Fleet was moving east to engage. The Japanese were ready.

At Brisbane and Raleigh, Newcastle and Sydney, landing-parties occupied the demoralized, half-destroyed townships. Only in Melbourne were they later. A gallant fight, a short fight, hopelessly outnumbered, the British ships heeled over and sank ; little blue Australian flag fluttering like a caged bird ; great red British hearts beating stoutly till the last.

Silenced were the Melbourne guns—naval and military. Down came the Japanese.

Hot riders, foaming horses, blood-streaked, galloping, galloping. . . . Tell the farmers ! Tell the settlers ! The enemy is here !

Then over the land flew large hydroplanes, dropping large bombs on large clumps of humanity : panic-stricken humanity.

Why blame them ? Here was good land to be had for the taking.

"No War at ANY price!" had cried Great Britain. "All right, don't worry, you needn't fight." . . . Poor Japan, with a vast surplus population. She must have room to put her children.—Rights of peoples. Her proletariat demand it. Invented rights to make everybody else wrong. Happy world. . . .

Oh, the glory of the rights of man! Take from the Capitalist? Quite right. Take from Australia? Why not? Take from England? Take away four hundred a year from the Members of Parliament to pay the unemployed whose right it is to be paid or given work? Paid in any case. Wage slaves.

So the riders rode and the farmers seized their rifles. First into their concentration areas were the Trades Union leaders: here were Imperialists to deal with. "Blast them, turn them out! coming into our country and killing our people!" Ssh, brothers of the *Internationale*, there is no 'our' country about it. Free countries, free people, all brothers; moreover you must not be stingy and keep all that vast Australia to yourselves.

But the men rolled in from every ranch, farm, village and mine, eager to save what was theirs. Nature's law.

Once occupied, the towns gave forth battalions of Japanese to right and left. The country was theirs. Scattered, thinly-populated Australia,

how could she defend with a few ships and nothing behind her?

Wire the Imperial Government quickly! Australia invaded? Impossible! If it is really so, we will send some ships. And ships were sent from the Pacific and Mediterranean Fleets: but no word must be breathed.

Meanwhile, gallant Australians joined their Defence units and marched to drive out the invader. Not very long did the little battles last. Hopelessly outnumbered, Australia left her dead and retired inland, fighting, surprised, dismayed, disillusioned—like the rest of us: and in so short a space of time was the coast—that vital coast—occupied. But English ships were steaming south. The Lion was coming to succour her cub. Panic-stricken women, clasping babies, wondering where their husbands were, running, sore feet, torn dress, hanging breasts, wild-eyed, streaming hair.

“Seen my man, any of yew?”

“No.”

“Ain’t seen my man? Blast yew for a fool! I want my man. Seen ’im, Digger?”

“No. Get away, you old bitch. Look out! there’s a Chink!” Crack! “Got ’im!”

Running back, baby crying. Sees an outpost.

“Any of yew seen my man? Any of yew Newtown?”

“Sydney. No. . . . Clear out of this.”

"Give me a gun, Digger. Give me one, I tell yew! Lie there, Halbert. Where's the Chinks?"

And she fights too. Her man killed, probably: that was the feeling. . . .

And another:

"Where's Miriam, Isaac? Think they'll do us in? Come on, this way. . . . Bring the moneys."

"Where yew going?"

"Let me pass, I tell yew. I've nothing to do with this. They're killing peoples terrible back there."

"Where's the man's gun?"

"He don't want no guns. Let 'im pass, I tell yew." So they passed, inland; protected again. . . .

And another:

"Stand fast, you fellahs. Nothing like the Canal, this. Steady. Keep on with the rapid fire. Make every shot tell. Damn that man, you're shooting like a Britisher. Keep steady. We can't go back, Sergeant. Get the men's bayonets fixed. Odd numbers first. Keep on firing. Where the—— God! They've got me, damn 'em! Stick to it, boys; stick to . . ." A pool of blood. Many machine guns. Hear the crack. Hear the whistle: that's far away from you. Hear the swish, swish. They have started on the flank.

Oh, there is a thrill in the air when you are being pressed. Duck—nearly got you. Keep

your head still. You missed a shot then. Bruised thumb? Use your fingers for the bolt, then. Thumbnail bleeding? Firing too rapidly. Useless these magazines; full of jagged pieces. Barrel getting hot? Let it burst then. No going back! As soon die now as any other time. Better than having a pint-pot at your head in a pub row. Advance, Australia!

Where is the British Fleet? Coming along. They will not stand a chance. Never mind. Better late than never.

Off Melbourne, the British Fleet fired hurricanes of gas on the Japanese. If the reply was prompt, the gas was stronger. Then explosives. Japanese hydroplanes were very accurate. Close the story. The odds were too heavy, but they sank where they fought, White Ensign and all. So did a few enemy ships. . . .

In France, the hope was fading. Street fighting, wood fighting, all retreating round Paris, hard pressed. And on the north coast, the grey waves of humanity ate up the downland, and the blue fell back and south, fearful lest a breach be made.

"Qu'ils se battent bien, ces cochons-là. Qu'as-tu, Paul? eh, mon vieux?"

"Merde. Je viens de recevoir un bon coup."

"Où?"

"Où crois-tu? Couillon, va."—A casualty.

"En avant les gars! Vive la Patrie! A bas les Bosches!"

" *Il crie bien, ce capitaine-là.*"

" *Eh b'en, c'est un marseillais,. Dieu, que j'ai soif ! T'as de la flotte, hein ?*"

" *Vide.*"

" *Salaud, va. Polpol, ton bidon, vite ! Zut que t'as mis dedans, hein ?*"

" *Café au lait.*"

" *Je ne le dirais pas. Lait de femme. Aigre comme tout !*"—A future dysentery case.

If you saw a little child wandering about the outskirts of Paris, you might have been certain he was looking for his father. The wife would look to the babies and carry them with her when she went to the communal kitchen. The kitchens changed their positions daily, for the bombs had been accurately aimed.

New orders from the Military Governor were posted frequently. Exhortations, commands, information. The crowds looked to the sky, hastily scanned the posters, then made for shelter.

At last, the dreaded order: Evacuation by *arrondissements*. . . .

The living stream was turned on. Horse-cabs, donkey-carts, dog-drawn trolleys, perambulators, hand-carts moving west, moving west.

Quick walking, a little run to keep up, a look behind, an arranging of a shawl, a low call to hurry ; the women, children and old men left their homes. The Defence of Paris was to take place in earnest. Stout boots were wanted. Warm

clothes were needed. It was to be a long march to an unknown destination. *Gendarmes* in front; *gendarmes* behind: not many; but the oldest all the same.

“*Marchez. Laissez-le ; il viendra.*”

“*Mais, c'est papa ! Il ne peut presque marcher !*”

“*Il viendra ; allons. Dépêchez-vous, là-bas en arrière !*”

Onward again, with the guns playing behind, and an overworked population in front.

Deserted and alone, France never grumbled. She took it all in the same old way, fatalistically and proudly. Homeless, houseless, sleeping in pigsties. . . .

“Aren't you terribly uncomfortable, in that filthy sty? I know it's cold but you might find some other——”

“No! My husband is at the front. I expect he is colder than I.”

The Government had moved to Bordeaux. They now moved to Brest, nearer to England. They knew what their fate would be. Class-conscious brotherhood was a complex thing and went strange ways.

A young Frenchwoman from the Basque country, dressed as a soldier, made her way to Paris and begged the Governor for a command. New Jeanne d'Arc? She begged hard and was sent forward, but lived only a few hours. No luck. . . . It had not worked this time.

The ' Retrievers ' had augmented and moved south of Paris, where the line was weakest. They had chosen a flag of their own and it was the flag of the last Plantagenets, quartered leopards of England with the French lilies. It was decorated with the Legion of Honour, and the whole brigade wore the red '*fourragère*.'

" Wot's this bloomin' bit of cord, Bill ? "

" That's instead of a medal."

" I'd sooner 'ave a bit of white bread."

" 'Eard from the missus ? "

" Yes. Things don't seem none too good at 'ome."

" We was a lot of bloomin' fools to come over 'ere."

" I don't know so much. Somethink to do, anyway."

" Close up there. Keep in your fours, for Christ's sake."

" Listen to 'im ! "

" Don't like fightin' in this country. Ain't used to it."

" Yes. Give us the old Somme, or Wipers, or the coast ! "

" Or Arras and Vimy, eh ? " Crash ! . . .

" Where's our humberellas ? They're startin' on us." Bang . . . Whirr . . . Whizz . . . Crash-h-h. . . .

" Get into the trench quickly, damn you. Hurry up ! "

"Bong jour, Frenchy."

"*Ohé, voici les gaillards !* Goot morning !"

"Ow are yer, eh? *Vin blanc, beaucoup ? Promenez, vite. Allez.* We've come to relieve yer."

"*Qu'est-ce qu'il dit ?*"

"*Sais pas. Sortez, allez hup. Au 'voir,* Tommy."

"*Au 'voir. Allez see Mam'selle. Plenty good. Unn frank. Couchez, couchez.*"

"*Il est drôle, ce type, hein ?*"

"Lord, what a mess ! and me with me dancin' shoes on too !"

"'Ere, Peggy, pull us out o' this. . . . That's better. Now, where are them damned Russians ? Heh, Fritz ! 'ow's the proletariat ? You just show them furry 'ats o' yourn a bit and I'll see if I can't let a little air in for yer."

"This trench will have to be"—(Pop, zzzis)—
"revetted. Sergeant, try and clear some of this mud out and fill up the parapet a bit."

"Sir."

"My God, this is a damned mess ! Where's the Commanding Officer ?"

"Up at Brigade, I . . . Gas, gas, gas ! Get your masks on quick, you . . ."

Gasping, clutching, tearing open their jackets, spitting, screwing up the eyes, sinking to their knees, in the mud, writhing . . . Still.

* * * * *

So it was in the beginning, so it will ever be on this sphere, where some believe peace and plenty to be on their way.

The flint axes, the gilded chariots, the sling and stone, the steel-tipped arrows, the battle mace, the arquebus, the grenade, the muzzle-loader, the H.E., the gas, the tanks, the aeroplanes.

Tired were the arms of War. His blows fell slower ; his horse was nearly done. He looked behind to where Famine sat.

Said Famine : " My arm is tired holding this balance."

Replied War : " I have nearly done. Are the vials being poured out ? "

" I think they will be soon," was the reply, but his teeth chattered so that War could scarcely hear.

" Another quiverful ought to do it. Thank you. I must go East again. Where's Death ? "

" Asleep."

" Give him the cue when you move off, will you ? You'll see when I've done. Ride close on my heels."

Then Ration-cards were introduced in England : the unemployed and Government officials receiving them first. Of course, there were protests, but then, as the Government pointed out, any others ought to be damned glad to eat anything, since they were all parasites, preying on the good things their hardworking Government obtained

for them. In fact, they really did not deserve a Government at all. People that grumbled like that ought to be put back under a Capitalist *régime*. Some people thought that a good idea, but then,—when Tommy is on the swing he always wishes he had spent his money on the roundabouts.

“I think the Government have managed the whole ration scheme very badly.”

“Ho, if yer think yer could do it any better, come 'an 'ave a try; you parasite!”

“Order, order.” From the Chair.

“You shut up, I 'aven't finished with this chap yet! Look 'ere, you; don't yer go away with the himpression as we're a-goin' to change it for you, nor any of the rest o' your cush, 'cos we ain't. Wot's good enough for them as we represents is good enough for you.”

So that clinched the matter. That is the way to talk to them! Faithful to the drill-book's maxim for advance guards: “Sweep aside all minor opposition.”

In the Balkans, the Russians and Turks had completely overrun the country and were struggling with tribes in Albania. Greece was occupied as far as Trikhala. Czecho-Slovakia had been overrun and Austria-cum-Hungary turned Red by force. A Red Army was settled in Lombardy and was moving down the centre of Italy.

In Syria, things were bad for the French. Aleppo had fallen and the French troops were

retiring south-west. Reinforcements were due, but had not yet arrived. The northern ports were held by the enemy, and the French port of Beyrouth had been shelled unmercifully by some old and battered Turkish cruisers that had suddenly appeared. Down the railway line the French retired, and after a wearisome march joined the remnants of the Beyrouth garrison west of Damascus. The Turks had occupied Beyrouth and there was no escape that way. The enemy's method of attack seemed to be by isolated and ferocious bands directed apparently on Aleppo, presumably not having heard of the French southern retreat.

News came through that Haifa and the southern Palestinian coast were favourably disposed to France and the reinforcements, not being able to land at Beyrouth, therefore made south and occupied Haifa without opposition. Towards this port then the French Army moved, fighting scattered bands and ever hurrying south. Defeated and fleeing, searching a way of escape rather than surrender. They were afraid of crossing the Jordan Valley in daylight, expecting formidable opposition, and therefore awaited the darkness. The morning found the tired army marching due south-west. Nine miles from Haifa they came upon the enemy. . . .

This enemy had apparently pursued them from far north, keeping along the coast-line, preventing

flight. The hearts of the French sank. The enemy outnumbered them. Once in touch, the enemy cavalry attacked. There was only one thing to do—retire, and bring the enemy after them, leaving their reinforcements to cut a way for them inland, through which they could ultimately reach the sea.

Through Abetz the French retreated, weary and worn. They could do no more. Here in this large plain they would fight and die. Nothing else was left. . . .

A great big dreary plain, with a railway-line and many dried-up rivers : one only being of use. Dusty, full of sheep,—useful thing for troops. Hills all round, an outlet only north-west. Cool nights, with many stars. Soldiers sunburnt and bleeding, dirty, full of disease, covered in sand-spots and pestered by flies. Beards of months' growth, untidy, unkempt. Shaking hands (for malaria was on them), chattering teeth, sunken cheeks, wild eyes. Tired, oh, so very tired ; hardly a word spoken.

" Eh b'en, nous voici. C'est la fin."

" Tu le crois ? "

" Je le sais."

" Ils viennent ! "

" Je les vois."

" Bonne chance ! "

" Au 'voir, mon vieux ! "

And the enemy attacked, and the French held

on, watching for the enemy to be broken from the rear. Straight shooting, careful shooting, few rounds left, sooner or later the bayonet. If the reinforcements break through, they will have to do so from their side.

" *Où sommes-nous ?* "

" *La plaine de Megidde, mon brave.* "

And so there was another Megiddo. . . . *The Megiddo ?*

The long drought was having a terrible effect on the world. Cattle and sheep diseases were everywhere. Meat food caused terrible sores to break out on people's faces and hands. The consequence of this was an increased demand for fish, and this demand could not be met. Fruit would not grow, vegetables were half their usual size, and the wheat crop was obviously to be a complete failure.

A terrible disease broke out in the towns, a disease that dotted people's faces with small black patches like a game of dominoes. This was alluded to as the "Black Death," and doctors were unable to diagnose it. It was infectious, and generally developed into a kind of 'lupus' that ate away the face and crept downwards. The death was lingering but sure. It started in Manchester, but soon came to London and wrought havoc in the East End. In vain did the Government curse the *bourgeoisie* for not having it as well. In vain did they say it was the result

of the Capitalist system. The disease increased.

...

Cholera broke out at Cardiff, the cholera that makes a man writhe and clutch his belly, the cholera that makes a man's heels come back and back till they touch his head, and the spine breaks with a sharp crack.

And all over Europe and the Near East it spread.

Precautions seemed useless, isolation impossible, disinfection hopeless. And the dead were buried in heaps, and the dead were burnt.

In the villages, old men walked miles to the nearest river for a bucket of water, and in the public-houses it sold at twopence a glass.—‘A measure of wheat for a penny . . . and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.’

“Is Mrs. Jones in, dearie? It's yer mother, ain't it?”

“Yus.”

“Is she in?”

“She's in bed.”

“I'll come in and see her. . . . Hagnes?”

“Yus.”

“I just looked in to see . . . Wot, yer've got it?”

“Yus.”

“Christ!”—And the good lady retreats at great speed and tells all her neighbours that Hagnes Jones has the Black Death. And, of

course, the child catches it too. No one dare take her away. Her husband has been living with another woman since he first saw the tell-tale spots, so he gets it and his mistress also. His mistress is somewhat public, so others give it their wives, and on it goes. Three weeks it takes to die. Result of bad meat, no water, and foul dust—and, of course, the former Capitalist system, which invented selling meat, digging for water and the making of dust.

And yet, the Capitalist system is wrong. . . .

In Wales, one fine day, there was a big earthquake, and half a village fell like a pack of cards. All over the country the shock was felt. It was unusual, certainly ; and the death-roll was heavy. But then, strange things were happening all over the world. . . .

In the country, people spoke of weird will-o'-the-wisps that burnt in threes like candles round a corpse. They took particular care to bring thirteen of the first spring flowers into the house, to ward off ill-luck. They put their fore- and little fingers together when they passed some one with a squint. They went miles out of their way to evade certain lonely corners where gaunt sign-posts loomed like gallows-trees from out the darkness. A two-headed calf with luminous eyes was seen on the Cotswolds, and its fame spread over the three counties. A hooded monk disappeared into the Downs at Storrington in Sussex,

and was seen by half the parish. People committed suicide in deep black pools surrounded by tall trees. It was alarming, all this. . . .

The Government brought in a Bill for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, just to make things easier for their new consciences and harder for the prisoner. It would then be possible, if a murderer were given the heaviest sentence—penal servitude for life—to let him off at the end of ten or twenty years. This, of course, would be very comforting, and make the game well worth the candle. They had pulled the house down, and were now searching to see if there were any more bricks to be found in the foundations. As for building a new house of concrete or wood, that was impossible. They knew it would have to be built up with the same bricks and the idea was distasteful; so they did not trouble.

A morning like so many other London mornings dawned and changed the black night into a grey day, overcast, raw, smoky. In the breakfast-room of his Club, Ogóne idly scanned his morning paper. The War News was much what he had expected. He closed the paper and laid it folded in front of his plate. His coffee was badly made this morning. His gaze wandered. "Late London Edition," "Twenty-two Pages," births, deaths and marriages. Riveted on the second column. . . . Could it be? And he read:

“TRYTON.—Yesterday, in the Siege of Paris, fell DAVID TRYTON, Corporal, of the 2nd Regiment of English Volunteers, while in charge of his section. Only child of the late C. L. Tryton, and Mrs. Tryton, of Kensington and Salop.”

He read it again. Its meaning came slowly. . . .

So David Tryton was dead ; even as he had expected. He had received no news of him since his departure. He would like to have done so : just a letter.

He rose from his breakfast. Why had Mrs. Tryton not told him ? He would go and see her. No, she might not know of him. David might not have told her. He walked down Piccadilly towards the Park. He saw three ambulances go by—Black Death. The streets were fairly empty. A match-seller stood on the kerb, but people edged away : he might be diseased. At St. George’s Hospital there was a string of stretcher-bearers. So the disease was spreading westwards. . . . In the Park, the trees seemed to be dead. It was a mournful spot. No riders in the Row. Horses ill ; besides, people could not afford the luxury.

Ogóne’s thoughts ran riot. The world held selfishness to be abhorrent. Good ; then what could be more selfish than to mourn the dead. Surely it was also a form of jealousy, if one believed in a God. The time would not be far

distant when he would see David again. He wondered how he would compare with his other friends, the ones who had gone long before. Would man have a great big heart in the intermediate sphere and have no preferences? Would that heart be able to hold all one had ever loved? He hoped so. A decision, a sorting process in this matter would be too difficult. Or, on the other hand, would such memories become ordinary, since every one was to be loved in the higher sphere? Perhaps—and it would be as well. Memories are good things to hold on to. Once you have experienced, nothing can rob you of it on this earth—and on the next, well, you may not realize you are being robbed.

He sat on a twopenny seat and thought yet more.

Why was he not crying? Why did not this bereavement rend his soul? He thought, and there came no answer. He was becoming ready to bear the final sorrow, perhaps. His heart was hardening. In front of him there passed individuals, hurrying. Young women with no breasts and a masculine slouch, strong-featured. Young men with grace in their movements, finely featured. The masculinity of the female and the femininity of the male. A sign of Ancient Greece. A sign that gleamed before the fall of Rome. An intermediate, sex-mingling type, ultra artistic, ultra savant; on the road to too much knowledge.

Mind the rim of the wheel : you cannot pass it here. . . .

Therefore, perhaps, the wheel would cease to turn, or the Great Smith would come with his hammer and beat it up.

When would the end come ? It could not be far off. People were hurrying ; rushing. . . . As he watched, his mind foresaw the rushing change to panic and the vast crowds swaying, stamping, crying, beating, trampling under foot, here and there, hither and thither, not knowing where to go.

He rose and walked on. He had gone a long way when he realized the Serpentine at his feet. Not the full-watered Serpentine, but a muddy pit, with pools, and a little rivulet running down the centre. Dried, for the crossing of the Kings, he thought. Back, then, across the Park to the Club : and there a letter. French stamp—Trying to open the wound ? Cruel little folded paper.

“ 2me REGT. DES VOLONTAIRES BRITANNIQUES,
ARMÉE DE PARIS.

“ You will be pleased to hear that there is no mud. I have written that sentence quite five minutes ago and I can’t think of anything to say.

“ We are happy here and feel we are doing something. The French courage is amazing. We learn it from them. It seems strange to remember

we always beat them in the days gone by. Water is scarce. We are allowed none for washing. I am bearded like you, but it's rather scraggy. Fritz has just sent over a lot of gas on our right, by the reports, and has done some damage. His aircraft is hawk-eyed, much to our fury, since we hardly get any sleep at all when the moon's up. I'm afraid I was rather bloody to you that other night, but I was feeling depressed, I don't know why. I enjoyed it though, really. I'd have sooner spent it with you than with most.

"My French is getting very fluent, but in hardly the drawing-room manner. I think I could teach you a few words you don't know. I have just realized I never wrote to your cousin to thank him for that week. I am idle, but tell him I meant to and I won't forget. This letter seems very dull. I remember before I went out to the last war, I thought I should be able to write wonderful stuff in that atmosphere, *mais ça ne marche pas*. So there it is. I have to take a patrol out to-night. I will try some of my Russian on the prisoners we'll bring back. Shall I send you a Soviet star?

"I heard from mother to-day. She doesn't approve of all this, but it can't be helped. I wish you were here in my section. We have great fun. I've been writing some verse, but it's not good enough to send you. I may later though, when I can do something worth while.

Crash ! They're off for the evening strafe ! We dig miles down these days. Deeper than the old Bosche dug-outs in the famous Hindenburg Line. Some one wants me. I may not get another chance of writing.

“ Best luck,
“ DAVID.”

Ogône re-read it. He was glad for it, but he was not satisfied. He had expected something different. ‘ I’d have sooner spent it with you than with most.’ Why had he not put “ any ” ? It was a disappointment ; but he had written. . . .

Poor boy. He would have liked a photograph with the ‘ scraggy beard.’ Perhaps a friend would send one. He went to his bedroom and opened an old black box that lay under his bed. He slipped the letter under the mass of papers it contained, drew forth a handful and glanced idly through them. Letters in Russian, in French, in English, in German, in Italian. An old summons, dated 1905, from the Social Revolutionaries. An old piece of brownish paper from Sultan Abd-el-Kader to a village in the South of Algeria, calling on the Faithful to resist the invader. A ‘ *tisbeh* ’ lay at the bottom of the box. He played with it, running the beads through his fingers. A little prayer-wheel from Thibet— ‘ *Om manê padmê hum.*’ A piece of Roman mosaic from Tipaza or Timgad. Letters of joy, of sorrow, of love. . . .

He was looking through these fragments of the past, searching memory and reflecting, when he heard a low rumble. He listened: it was coming nearer, gathering in intensity, rushing sudden. A crash as if the roof of Heaven had fallen in! Another crash! Was it the rain at last? In the streets people were running. Were they frightened? But no rain came, no drop; and the rumble continued. The crashes came at intervals, and then the thunder moved on.

There seemed a great silence after the thunder had moved on. There were fewer people in the streets. Perhaps the news of the earthquakes had frightened them. Where was the rain? The rest of that day Ogóne spent in the Club, where the thunder was the universal topic. Many Clubs had been closed during the last month owing to lack of members, several having amalgamated in order to keep open.

"Did you hear that thunder this morning?"

"Yes. Did you?"

"Why, my dear fellow, it was right over my head!"

"Where were you, then?"

"In the city."

"I expect it means rain."

"I shouldn't be surprised."

"Damned funny."

"Most extraordinary."

And another:

" I expect there'll be rain after that thunder."

" Yes. Did you hear it ? "

" Of course. My good fellow, it was just over my head ! "

" If it rains, it'll stop the football."

" Yes. That'll be rotten."

Over England, Scotland and Wales the thunder rolled on ; impotent thunder, frightening by its suddenness, by its intensity. London became black—people were used to that. The country became black—that was disturbing. For three hours in the middle of the day the black pall stretched itself across Albion, and as suddenly lifted. How the astronomers were excited ! And the next day every one of them, amateur and professional, wrote a reason for it all and quarrelled delightfully for a whole week in the pages of the newspapers.

Now was the time to beat Drake's drum, blow Kidd's whistle, shake Boadicea's spear and pray for the return of England's Great, that they might help in this hour of apprehension and trial.

Lethargy was hanging from the sky like great stalactites, dripping and finding its way into every interest of man ; while from the ground rose up the stalagmites of fear. When the two products of rain-soaked caves meet, mankind can but stand still and shake at the knees. And this was the atmosphere of London, with its plague and thunders, drought and darkness.

During the next two days, the thunder came

and went, and the darkness descended at strange hours. God was veiling His face so that He should not see the end: the fall of another civilization. Hardened heart, cold blood, indifference to God, love of body, desire for gain, hate of individuals, jealousy, power, hypocrisy, selfishness had all helped to raise the civilization and kill the soul. Man in his conceit. . . . Too much power: power over beasts and birds, water, fire, earth and sky; chipping little pieces off the rim and carving great chunks out of the axle. But the Wheel is God's wheel, and if it is spoilt the spoilers shall suffer. But the spoilers are earnest. In Germany, they call it KULTUR, in America PROGRESS, in England CIVILIZATION, in France LA VIE.

And what did the clergy do at this time? Oh, nothing much. The R.C.'s compared the darkness to the Hell that was awaiting all other denominations. The Church of England gazed vacantly about. The Wesleyans in Cheshire did not believe it was as dark as people said in London, and that, if so, it proved conclusively the evils of drink. So that was that. Of course a few old maids were frightened and drew up fresh wills leaving their goods and chattels to the Church of Rome or the Irish Three State (The Dail, Dublin Castle and the Rest of Ireland), and others bought a new stock of candles for distribution to their favourite saints; but, in

general, the veneration for priests and bearded ideas of God had rather waned, probably owing to the strange game that had had such a strong vogue a few years earlier.

Ogóne was much disturbed, for on returning to his Club one day, he had found a letter from his cousin at Durham. This letter started off with a really genuine expression of regret at the death of David Tryton, recalling the shock of his own loss and bewailing the wickedness of the world. It went on about the thunder and the lack of rain, the darkness and the increased superstition of trouble that pervaded his people in the North. Then the letter began to tell strange news: Lorna had had no word from Ogóne. The girl seemed depressed and pale. Would he not write to her? Did he remember their conversation? He was really rather worried about her. Women were strange. They took things so to heart. When was he coming back? Did he love her? Why had he not spoken to Lorna before he left? He begged him to write and finish with it one way or the other. The chickens had been very bad and many had died. They had to walk a mile for their water. The pigs were too thin and the garden a desert. He was trying an evangelical revival. The scarcity of milk was terrible for the children. How would it all end? Was the Book of the Revelation coming true after all? He was not feeling so well as usual. A little

lumbago or rheumatism or something in the back and shoulders. The Bishop had been to lunch and held a Confirmation. The new Bishop did not intone, so it was very disconcerting. He was also very High Church and said most of the service in Latin, with the new pronunciation too. Sounded terrible. He was quite upset about it and some of the mothers called the Bishop a German on account of it. Miss Pringle had written straight to the Archbishop of York about it.

And that was what the letter was about.

The passage about Lorna troubled Ogóne.

Did he love her? Should he marry her? Would there be time? Marriage, exotic fortnight with an iceberg. . . . But was she an iceberg? Well then, exotic fortnight with a Bunsen burner. . . . Worse still. Marriage, carnal love, tapering off, glimmerings of sympathy, love, children, divided love, interest, slight jealousy, children growing up, worry, getting used to it all. . . .

Well, that would be all right; but it might be: Marriage, carnal love, tapering off, reaction, boredom, temper, annoyances, misunderstandings and the eternal round of 'tiff and kiss,' 'kiss and tiff.'

What a risk! Was it worth it? If Love was not, could it grow? It must, or Lorna would be miserable. Yet, she would be so anyhow. He must decide. He could not help feeling that

it had all happened at the wrong time ; that his thoughts would have been very different had to-day been ten years back. With the siftings of his memory he recalled the sense of love that had beaten on his heart in days gone by and he wondered whether softness had let his nature go and journeyed off to find another soul. Was his heart as hard, unyielding and as callous as he felt, and was this love a thing denied him in this world ? He strove to find the answer, but there was shouting in the street. Members went to the window, raised heads from papers, gazed inquiringly through the door.

Ogóne rose too. He walked to the door, passed through, stood on the pavement. Then he heard it :

“ Speshul Edition ! Paris falls ! ’Ere you are, sir. Thank you, sir.”

Paris had fallen. That which all Englishmen had subconsciously dreaded had happened. It came as a cold shower of water on a sleeper. What would happen now ? Would France give up ? How would it affect England ?

Ogóne stood on the pavement, his hair gently stirred by the breeze, gazing vacantly. It had happened so suddenly, and yet it had been expected. Behind him, in the doorway of the Club, members spoke excitedly. The thunder rumbled overhead, but the people were well used to it by now.

Gradually the members strolled inside, Ogóne the last. Seats and papers again, pipes and a glass, letter-writing, forgetting.

And into Paris, deserted and ruined, marched the Red Armies. Street by street, house by house—and the destruction was enormous. Little cut-off sections of the French Army beat their retreat from the galling fire only to find themselves withdrawing into the arms of a German platoon.

Georgian cavalry in Paris . . . Crying : “ *Vasha, vasha ! . . .* ”

Tartar troops in Paris . . . Crying : “ *Ia allah, ia allah ! . . .* ”

Slavs, Mongols, Saxons in Paris. . . .

Swaggering, snub-nosed Russians ; soft-treading narrow-eyed Letts ; blue-eyed, rough, careless Germans ; long-faced, sallow, flashing-eyed Mohammedans. All in gay Paris, the home of delight, of courage, of history. And the Parisians—dead, dying, mangled, dark in darker blood. Blue uniforms, English faces—‘ Here the Retrievers fell ’—French faces, little moustachios, slim waists.

A deserted city, crumbling walls sheltering her sons, her friends, her enemies.

West of Paris, a sadly-mauled Division rested to recover its strength. The General watched the flames and smoke rise from the town he loved, and his field-glasses grew clouded from the tears in his eyes.

“ *Paris, Paris ! te voilà, vieille ville, brillante—*

détruite ! Belle ville de ma jeunesse, au revoir. Ville d'amours ! Ach, ces sales Bosches ! Ohé, Boulanger ? "

" Mon général."

" Paris est morte. Vive Paris ! "

The Town was cleared of snipers, a great stillness hung in the air. Only the trotting of horses, the jingle of spurs, the stamping of boots swelled the atmosphere and sent its echoes to and fro. The battered flag on the Louvre gave way to a new blood-red one with the new pre-arranged letters: R.S.F.S.F., gleaming gold and fluttering bravely. Its hoisting was accompanied by the firing of rifles and the shouts of the soldiers. What vicissitudes ! Poor Paris ! Gauls, Romans, Charlemagne, Middle Ages with English Wars, Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Guise, Medici, the Admiral, Pompadour, Revolution, Empires, Monarchy, Commune, Bourgeois State, Wars, Wars, Wars. . . .

The little flats that were no more, the theatres smashed and bashed ; the gardens scared of little birds ; the statues cracked and chipped ; cafés—blinds in shreds, glass on pavement ; pierced *urinoirs* ; overturned newspaper-stands ; holes in roads ; blood, bodies, straw, articles of equipment ; helmets.

And behind Paris—refugees crying for the bread that came not, searching for the water they found not.

And the strange thing was that whether followers of Daudet, Herriot or Jaurès, they all fought, were fighting or had fought, for that strange myth '*La Patrie*.'

Even as in England in the first European War, battalions had been made up of Unionists, Liberals, Labourites, Communists, Conservative Fanatics, and Socialist Fanatics. And stranger still, none had realized that perhaps the country was not worth fighting for. The apple is ripening in the orchard: it will soon fall. But neither the capitalists nor the proletariat shall be the harvesters: that is left for the hosts of Heaven, in God's good time.

With the fall of Paris appeared from the north, and viâ Marmora, large battleships, submarines and cruisers, who had bided their time, but now were ready. Scorning the Italian Navy that had spent itself on the Thracian coast, the fleets made for Marseilles in the south and the English Channel in the north. Aeroplanes escorting, red flags fluttering. . . .

Ships built in the Baltic, ships built in the Azov Sea: German construction, Russian sailors. Outside Marseilles, the French Fleet. Outside Dover, English warships, guarding our little island.

Outside Dover, a conclave is in progress. There is need of repairs for the Red Fleet, there is need of rest. They are going into harbour. England

neutral, position therefore delicate. Cannot be done without internment. . . .

The Red Fleet is not used to not doing what it likes and therefore steams towards Dover. A shot across her bows. . . . Another. . . .

A broadside from the Red Flag. Action begun. Very short. Outnumbered again. Washington Conference. Naval Disarmament. Battered and sunk was this little flotilla of guardians. Good enemy gunnery from all sides. Did Dover open fire too? The O.C. was not such a fool. He only had one job and was not going to lose it by opening fire on brothers or sisters, or whatever Russians are called. The Red Fleet had shown its hand, but was not waiting and moved off towards France.

The French Fleet did no better, off Marseilles ; but a landing was prevented and the battle raged some time in consequence.

The effect of the engagement off Dover was most amusing. Orders were immediately sent for the arrest of the officer in charge of the flotilla that had dared interfere with Russia on the high seas. The officer was, of course, at the bottom of the sea, so the Admiral commanding the Southern squadrons was relieved of his post to make amends. The O.C. of the Dover forts patted himself hard on the back and gave his wife a box of chocolates, of somewhat bitter flavour, no doubt. . . . But he had been wise.

There was a Cabinet Meeting about it all. The P.M. spoke :

"This is all very serious. Here we have, gentlemen, a servant of the Cabinet opening fire on a friendly nation without orders from us."

"From me," corrected the Admiralty.

"From my friend over there, I should say, gentlemen."

"What? do you mean, Tom, as they never asked your permission?" asked War.

"No, not a bloomin' word."

"They'd 'ave to 'a done, in my Department," smirked the Minister of War.

"Hoh, would they?"

"Gentlemen, I was saying that steps must be taken to stop this kind of thing."

"Send Tom to sea to look after 'is job proper," cried some one.

"'Old yer jaw, you!"

"Gentlemen, I am very pleased to say that the Dover forts did not open fire. I am, therefore, putting in that officer for a knighthood."

"Why?"

"Don't you talk so much, Tom!"

"I will if I wants to. Why make 'im a knight? Wot's 'e done as well as us?"

"Don't want no knights," remarked the Board of Trade.

"You 'ad a sticky one Saturday, I bet!"
(This was a great joke. Ha, ha. . . .)

"Yus, an' I saw you up the Mile End Road the other night be'avin' like a lord, thinkin' you was everybody."

"Better than thinkin' you was nobody, like some I knows."

"Hoh, is it?"

"Hit is!"

"Well. . . ."

"Gentlemen, I was thinking that I might as well inform you that many people of experience expect an unprovoked attack by the victorious Red Armies."

"They've got to get over the sea first!"

"What's to stop them?" asked the Lord Chancellor, mildly.

"The Navy, of course!" replied the Admiralty.

"Oh." (Strange, very strange, but no stranger than was to be expected.)

"But we don't want no war."

"No, we don't want no war, an' what's more, nor does Germany and Russia."

"No, not against us."

"No."

"No."

"No."

A quaint meeting!

Countless demagogues. Blind brothers. Uncertain enthusiasts. Interested disinterest. Torn-off veils. Naked beauty, pock-marked. Ideals as they are, very different from what one thinks.

Air balloons, always bursting. Betrayed proletariat. Unintentionally betrayed by ideals. Not their fault. Nobody's fault. It is all decreed. Eternal Wheel of Fate. No King: monarchist agitation. King: republican agitation. Nothing at all: every agitation under the sun. Carry on. . . . If you cut a donkey's head off when he is looking over the precipice the body is bound to fall into the abyss. Withdraw the donkey, then, and cut off his head in a house, if you like. In either case the donkey is no earthly good. And the donkey is the State. But—Time enough to say 'Good-morning' to the Devil, when you meet him.

Six days after the capture of Paris, the French Government gave in, signed a terrible armistice, and escaped to England. In the armistice terms was the decree that France should henceforth be a Soviet Republic, for 'all that dwell upon the earth shall worship the Beast whose names are not written in the Book of the Lamb. . . .' And so it came about, and everything was sovietized, from the Banks to the little boy that walks down the Quai d'Orsay with painted lips and a silver-topped cane. They hanged the Governor of Paris and shot his wife; they imprisoned Pierre B  noit and Maurice Rostand, but let the latter go; and even M. B  noit's insistence on his adherence to *Sinn Fein* did not save him. L  on Daudet had disappeared and no trace of him

was to be found save a night-shirt with an embroidered 'fleur de lys' on the breast. The Freemasons brought all the wisdom of Solomon to bear and were enabled to obtain many posts of authority.

Victor Margueritte was made Kommissar of Public Morality and awarded the Soviet Star as a recompense for any past decorations he may have mislaid.

One or two of the Algerian Administrators were appointed to the Tax Collecting Office. Franklin-Bouillon was made an Honorary Comrade-General of the Red Turkish Army. Gyp was made Censor of the Press and every one was very happy, especially when a certain cadaverous gentleman from a certain lugubrious café was made Master of Soviet Revels.

Then the famous note was sent to England, printed in the paper and destined to set all tongues wagging.

" To the Bourgeois Government of Great Britain.

" COMRADES !

" You will see that the unanimous voice of France has called upon the Eastern World Proletariat to bring relief to the capitalist-trampled people of the West. You will realize that the existence of a non-Soviet Government a few miles away is distasteful to the *Internationale*.

" We therefore inform you that we await the proclamation of a Soviet Republic in Great Britain at the earliest possible date.

" We are certain that you will accept this suggestion, otherwise our Peace-loving *Internationale* must take steps to help your people to freedom.

" On the receipt of your invitation we will dispatch troops to keep your people in order and also specialists to instruct in the managing of a Soviet.

" We should be pleased if you immediately effected the arrest of your King and all aristocrats. We suggest you send the former to Paris to save trouble.

" We, the European Soviet, await your reply with interest and offer our salutations to the English, Scotch and Welsh United Soviet Federative Socialistic Republic.

" Long live the Third Internationale ! "

Was there ever such excitement ! The Cabinet could not understand it. They even called it " damned lip ! " They were disconcerted, taken aback, flummuxed indeed.

In the Clubs :

" What damned cheek this letter is. Have you read it ? "

" Yes. What else do you expect ? "

" I think it's perfectly scandalous."

“ Will they attack ? ”

“ Of course.”

“ That’ll mean the old Sam Browne again, my boy. On English soil, too. It’ll do us a power of good.”

“ Well, if them Bolshies ’aven’t got some cheek ! Read it, Bert ? ”

“ Yus.”

“ Wot do yew fink abaht it ? ”

“ Not much.”

“ Wot’ll the Government say ? ”

“ Damned if I knows. Better arsk ’em.”

“ Strike me bloody well pink ! ”

“ They’ll strike you bloody well red, if they comes ’ere.”

“ They won’t never dare ! ”

“ They’d better not, is all I says ! ”

On the tubs :

“ . . . In me ’and I ’ave a little pamphlet wot was written by Gladstone. Just a minute an’ I’ll read you wot ’e says. . . . ”

“ Wot abaht this ’ere Bolshie note ? ”

“ I shall come to that. This is what Gladstone . . . ”

“ Wot abaht it, then ? ”

“ Mr. Gladstone says . . . ”

“ Are yer deaf ? ”

“ Well, wot I thinks about it is, it’s damned cheek. Mr. Gladstone. . . . ”

“ ’Ear, ’ear.”

This news disturbed Ogóne and made his mind up for him in a way he had not expected. The news could only mean war and darkness, and was the end. He took up his pen to write to Lorna, and started :

“ Times are bad with us, Lorna ; and in the midst of it, our thoughts fly to those we love. If I said I did not love you, it would be false—I do. It is very difficult to try and make somebody understand the thoughts that are besetting me at this moment, but I will try. You know, Lorna, I have always believed in ‘ *Konyetz* ’—the end. Now I feel we are near it. The feeling I cannot explain, I can only tell you it is there.

“ I have told you that if ever there was a woman I loved it was you, but I would not think of asking you to be my wife. This for many reasons. The days are so uncertain, and the future that is so clear to me is one in which marriage means nothing. The future of Eternal Love. If this is harsh, I apologize, for I do love you. Your father’s letter made me see that I had misunderstood you the other night. I am sorry ; but perhaps it was for the best. I wish I were a great poet, so that I could speak to you in verse. My hopes—any hopes, for marriage at this time must die ; there is no time for them to live, and it’s thinking of this that recalls William Morris’s verse that I write you now :

' Dream in the Dawn I come to thee
Weeping for things that may not be !
Dream that thou layest lips on me !
Wake, wake to clasp Hope's body dead ! '

" I want you to believe me when I say that I am certain we shall meet again soon, whether before the end or after. It is near now, I am certain. The plagues are terrible in London now, the darkness and thunder terrifying, and the constant small '*tremblements de terre*' are increasing. It must be coming. I feel strangely elated—that word does not sound right. Is it ?

" Over all the world, God is stretching His hand. The sphere has ruined itself and I am not sorry.

" It would be wonderful if God could let us see His new world together.

" Is this letter worrying you ? I am pinning my whole life on this event I have written of. I want to be in at the kill (as Lord Alma would say), and be of some service when it happens. That is my great ambition. It has suddenly struck me that I never told you this before. I think, darling, you had better stay at home, but I should also like to say how comforted I should feel to have you near me, here. It will be dangerous though, I'm afraid.

" It is only two o'clock, but it is pitch dark and the Heavens are angry. Can one blame them ? It is a long, long night. Let's hope the

dawn will be for us among many others. Some will never see it. The terror will stalk abroad when the trumpets blow and the last vial is poured.

"Lorna, I love you. Love you better than any woman I have ever known. Believe me, dear, and be with me in spirit. I am not a prophet or a seer ; just a servant of God, an understanding one, a hoping one.

"If the darkness is terrifying and the earth gives up its dead, pray, Lorna, pray to the God you believe in, for mankind will have need of prayers that day. There is strength in prayers, infinite strength.

"I feel like wishing you ' Good-night,' it is so dark. As it is, though, I wish you Faith, Love and Hope. May we both be worthy when the end comes, for as I love you, I believe it at hand.

"God bless you, Lorna, I love you, I love you."

Ogóne sealed his letter, and outside the sky was dark and the birds were still, even as his conscience, for he believed. . . .

THE Government could not make up its mind. It was indignant and worried, so it split the difference and sent a Note expressing its surprise and a hope that good relations between the Governments would be always kept. It also congratulated France on her new-found 'liberty,' whatever that might mean.

But this reply did not dispel the fear in the heart of England.

Day by day the bread queues grew longer, the faces of the waiters grew paler and the infection of the Black Death spread in crowds.

Sundays saw a few more people in the streets, and they wore their best clothes in order to hang on firmly to their idea of civilization, that idea that has even been introduced among natives in South Africa. There, of course, there is no Sunday best, but only the difference between walking stark-naked on weekdays and sticking a postage stamp on their navels for the Sabbath.

People dropped in the streets, and only masked, rubber-gloved men dared touch them. Hope-

lessly out of control was this disease, and it was ever spreading. Perpetual motion at last.

The House of Commons minority urged universal service and the raising of militias. They were informed there was no need, for the Red Soviets were their own good friends.

Poor old John Bull ! His top-hat was crushed in by weight of universal brotherhood ; his whiskers scraggy from the effects of party storms ; his flagged waistcoat stained with the bile of his own countrymen ; his coat rent asunder by the ideals of Empire-tearers ; his trousers frayed by the teeth of his own bulldog who had developed Red Rabies, and his boots in pieces, sole torn to ribbons and heel worn down by the tramp, tramp, tramp of the Old Man looking for his friends.

Never mind, John. Go and bury yourself deep in some lonely spot like Blackpool and in about three thousand years you might be interesting.

Behold an article of head-gear. What small heads the ancients had !

Behold a multi-coloured waistcoat. Joseph's, to be sure. This must have been Ancient Egypt then, or Palestine. . . . No, no ; not at Blackpool, ye new people ! Further south, on the coast ; you may find a Semitic skull or two there.

War dismounted. The remaining arrows, stolen from Conquest's quiver, should be shot on foot.

Famine rode off, teeth chattering, and withered the paltry crops with his breath. He called on the Sun to help him, but the Sun was tired. He called on the Frost to help him and he was an Anarchist—artist as well, like most of them!—so he came and froze people to death and drew pretty patterns over their mouths, just for fun. He hung glass-like beads on their hair which jingled as the wind whistled through it. He froze little patches of blood that came from their ears so that they looked like ruby ear-rings. He froze the eyes wide open, so that they looked like moonstones; pale, very pale. But then he *was* an artist!

The Wind was jealous; so it blew houses down, and trees on top of passers-by, and said to the Frost: "There! I'm as good as you!" But he was reproved by Famine, who told him to mind his own business and not infringe on Death's copyright.

Had the people realized the future in England then, many would have thought deeply, would have remembered the good things in life and prayed for their retention in the next world. They would have liked to recall many things, according to their nature.

Thus one:

"I would wish to recall the happy evenings spent with my friends, those sunny days when we played cricket till the shadows grew long and

the days when we backed a first-rate horse and watched him come romping home first. I would wish to recall the memory of my wife, long gone from my side, her first kiss and the love we bore one another. I would remember the financial risks I took, and the thrill of gain ; the nights at the theatre and the happy weeks in the South of France. I would recall the satisfaction of believing I have done my work well, given freely of my wealth and consciously hurt no man, woman or child."

Thus another :

"I would wish to recall—my wife and the kiddies, my old mates in the trenches, the day I got the D.C.M., and our little home. I would like to remember them 'bus rides into the country and the picnics in the woods. The trips up the river to Windsor, and the pictures my missus and I went to when we was courtin'. Them summers at Southend was good fun. Yus, I would like to remember them. . . ."

Thus yet another :

"I would wish to remember the warmth and the sun, my friends and my journeys. My travels have been so many, but I would wish to recall them all—Africa and Asia, Europe and the places that are in none of the three. Great loves would I recall, and the song of birds ; the smell of English gardens after rain ; the hills and dark-green valleys, waving cornfields poppy-

strewn, and black and white thatched cottages and barns. I would also remember bathing in warm seas and tramping over new country in search of adventure. The sight of birds I had never before seen would I recall, and the sound of their wings through the air. The sound of rippling water over heated rocks, and the smell of the flowers on the bank. The smell of countless roses, sensuous, overbearing—and the Love of God.”

It would be as well to recall the more lasting happinesses of life, often less satisfactory at the time, but repaying an hundredfold at the end.

. . .

The reply, therefore, from France was awaited eagerly.

People began to hurry out of London, for Rumour said the enemy was going to attack. People imagined the form the attack would take and remembered the bomb-dropping of years before. People wrote to the papers and paid for the publication of their letters, lest their advice to the Government be not seen. Thus they put their consciences right with their country.

At last an answer did arrive. Quite simple and greatly to the point :

“The Third *Internationale* request a direct reply to their former Note within twenty-four

hours, or they will be compelled to take action for the liberty of the English proletariat."

Christmas! Well then, unfortunately, the British Government forgot its teachings of pacifism, of love of enemies, of inviting all aliens to England and thinking them better than their own people, of capital levies and all the rest of the stuff, and replied within two hours:

"Do your worst!" . . . or words to that effect.

Was not that a surprise? But then, you cannot walk about in a mask and domino all your life; one or the other must be taken off sometime; and in this case it was the mask.

Then the British Government called on Volunteers, but the rush was not amazing; people had forgotten about defending their own country, in fact they did not really know whether the country was their own. However, a good many turned up, put on a uniform, and shrugged their shoulders. It had come at last!

"Good Lord, I thought it would take a month of Note-exchanging at least before the Government did anything."

"Yes. I'm sorry now I didn't join the 'Retrievers.'"

"So am I. We'll never be able to stop 'em in England. The country's asleep."

"What else can you expect? Let's hope the whole rotten show blows up; I'm about fed

up with those fellows arguing the toss morning, noon and night."

"They asked for it, now they're damned well going to get it."

"Yes, and serve 'em right."

What with the Minister of War and his Under Secretary telling the Generals how to carry on one can imagine there was a certain amount of difficulty in moving troops south. The National Railways found it difficult to transport large bodies of manhood without causing serious inconvenience to their ordinary passengers.

Anyhow, the sleeper was waking up slowly, and that was something.

The enemy did not waste much time and, one night, the heavens watched fast-flying aeroplanes passing towards London.

Just a twitter, twitter, getting louder till it shrieks, then a crash. . . .

And another, and another. Fifty bombs the first night, and well aimed too.

St. Martin's-in-the-Fields was no more, neither was Threadneedle Street. Gravesend had its full share: other parts as well, and Buckingham Palace lost half its stables. And was not the Order of the White Rose furious? Such insolence! Might have killed him! They thought nothing of the homeless in the East End.

There were homeless ones also in the West End, but there were hotels for them.

The Tubes and Undergrounds began their old trick of sheltering the frightened. Why had they not thought of increasing Aldgate Station during the war-lull? It was packed and dirty, and the very Tower of Babel could not have competed with the tongues talked.

But the enemy had another little trick up their sleeves.

Gas for the Tubes and Undergrounds! So they tried it, and it succeeded and the screams were ghastly. Traffic stopped dead on many lines. It was not safe. The Underground was a death-trap and the gas-fumes hung for days.

The Anti-aircraft guns were useless, for the moment the enemy was being disturbed he would send down thick smoke-clouds and steer by compass, dropping Death indiscriminately.

The panic in London grew. The enemy flew further afield and gassed Brighton, Dover, Birmingham, Cardiff, and Leeds. The terror spread inland.

The Government were powerless. Individual members of that august body were seen, standing firmly in the street, gazing up at the enemy aeroplanes, muttering impotently: "Capitalists, Capitalists!"

People rushing madly crushed others in their path, spluttering, gas-choked.

The mornings saw carts picking up the dead: ex-soldiers with box-respirators did the work,

sighing. Four previous years of war for this! Impotent, impotent, impotent! Scream it aloud, for ye are undone by your folly.

Roads to be cleared; coffins to be made. Hurry up, hurry up; more to come.

Men going mad. The little screw unloosed from the brains of those who had seen this sort of thing before. Only a little screw and it does not take much to loosen.

Real earnest believers in Peace and Brotherhood shouted terribly naughty things against the enemy which, if they were only to have time, they would forget in a year or two and be prepared to call him Friend once more.

Recruiting increased, but the concentration camps were easy targets.

In vain did the gallant little Air Force battle for the lives of its countrymen, even as they had done before. Why, nobody could tell; since they must have known they were not worth helping and that the people of England would be just as happy ruled by a Parsee or a Swahili. Internationalism is a fine thing. . . .

Of course, a good many people shouted for Peace and wept with fury because the Government had not had a Conference before it all, or referred it to the League of Nations.

In broad daylight the enemy came, nothing could deter them.

A man was walking down the street, his little

daughter trotting happily along by his side. A siren blows, screeches its warning. The pair hurry faster and edge toward the pavement.

"What's that, Daddy?"

"A whistle, dear."

"What's it whistle for?"

"Don't ask questions, dear; hurry along fast."

"Why?"

"We must get home quick."

"But muvver said we. . . ." The twitter again; fast, faster, rush, roar, crash. . . . Seconds, dazed seconds pass. A man bleeding, across him the remains of a child. He groans, he shouts, he screams:

"Devils! Devils! Oh, God, how could you! Look, God, look! I hate You, I hate You!"

But God was watching. . . .

Too great a store on life. The dawn is not far off. There is a reason for it all and we know that it is good. МАКТОУБ. Be content.

A woman passing would suddenly fall. Terrified witnesses looked quickly to the sky. Nothing. Black Death, that was all. The two things together are nerve-racking. Watch their faces before they fall: little black smudges—no bombing there.

'This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This . . . '

John of Gaunt, you spoke the truth five hundred years ago, but now. . . .

The speech is too beautiful, too sad to recall. What was, and what is.

Ancient Rome, glorious Greece, Moors of Spain, Royal Egypt, gorgeous Arabia, followers of Belisarius, did you weep the coming day, or did you clash your cymbals and cry 'All hail!' to the dawn of another world.

"Celia, goddess of my delight, thou shalt lie upon white jackals' skins and tall slaves shall hang on every word, tall slaves as black as ebony. And I will give thee mirrors made of polished bronze and gold, and a weeping-bowl of coral from the sea."

"My lord is good."

Centuries pass.

"Mabel, me dear, I'll buy you a nice fur coat from Selfridge's an' we'll 'ave a butler or two, just to look smart, dressed nice, yer know. An' I'll give yer a better necklace than wot Mrs. Brown's got, an' a nice tortoiseshell comb to go in yer 'air."

"You are a toff!"

Not much difference between the centuries. Roundabouts and swings.

The British Fleet had some success against enemy aircraft, their gunnery being good; besides, the enemy was becoming extremely self-assured and therefore careless. Crowds filled the great roads leading out of London, and the Scotch Expresses were packed full. Before the depart-

ure of each train, medical inspectors examined all passengers for traces of the Black Death. This, however, did not prevent sudden seizures during the journey and a panic in the compartments.

Many stations were hit and badly damaged—Reading, Swindon, Liverpool Street, Charing Cross, Euston. Hospitals shared the same fate and the saving of life became hopeless.

St. George's showed a gaping front to Constitution Hill; beds suspended from the cut-off floors, bodies everywhere, as if a great giant had been hungry and taken a bite through the middle of a cake.

This was not the worst. The terror was to take another form.

The river-valleys of our little island began to tremble. For two days and two nights this was felt, and wise folk left their homes. None too soon, either; for one early morning, in the Thames Valley, the earth began to show cracks, big cracks. They swelled and stayed, so that it looked like many arteries, opened and dark, branching from the river bed. In many places, these cracks steered their course through fields; and in a few cases through villages. More disaster; but the cracks were not deep.

The Severn Valley followed suit; the Tyne, the Ouse. . . . The earth was dying of thirst, its skin was cracking; quite human in its effect.

Now there could be no doubt that something ghastly was about to happen.

The faces of the British were drawn and haggard. Those that had seen the cracks lived in terror lest the earth should open under their feet and swallow them alive.

“ ‘Ere, lend a ‘and, for Gawd’s sake. The Missus is down there. Fetch a pick, quick. Oh, God ! ” And he tears at the earth with his hands, trying to get down to where his wife lies, wedged in the earth. Sightseers come and stare and wonder what would happen should the cracks widen and widen, or deepen and deepen. A shiver of the earth, a scattering of the crowd ; no more.

And the constant thunder added terror and the blackness lasted a whole day. The moon looked mad, the stars seemed to laugh, the nightmare was long.

Over the whole country it spread. Cracks appeared in fields and streets, and people ran from them. Like trenches through Ypres, but dry. . . .

People began to pray. You could see them in the streets. Cowards, who turned to their God only when adversity beset them. Some had never prayed before, some had ceased since their husbands had been killed, or their sons taken from them. A voice in the blackness would call out.

It was not confined to the British Isles. Over the whole world this was being felt. Vesuvius was roaring inside like a caged lion. Kilimanjaro was showing great boils on her side, as if plague-ridden. Popocatepetl snorted like a steam-engine.

And some were furious that after all civilization had done to curb the elements, the earth, mildest of things, should turn traitor on the people who had worked her to death, cut her body open, torn out her bowels, pounded her face with H.E., and buried stakes in her heart.

New York was terrified. The island was sinking.

In vain did lace-skirted priests shower water on bent heads, light candles and talk Latin. In vain did surpliced canons bless and exhort. In vain did moustached evangelists urge this to be the result of the drunkenness of the world.

In darkness did the world labour, while the thunder boomed overhead, and the vivid flashes of lightning showered sparks upon the dead. The daylight, that came when it wished, was pale and ghostly, sending long shadows to frighten men more.

The sea grew troubled and hungry, and beat men down into its arms. . . .

Church bells tolled, but the sound was hollow and unsatisfactory. It made Man shiver the more.

But from Ogóne's heart a great load had lifted. Uncertainty had vanished. He was expectant. He was supremely happy.

During these dread nights he prayed long and fervently. In the days he walked the streets, comforting many, helping move the dead, tending the diseased, fearless of infection, firm in his faith. Others were gallant, men and women, self-sacrificing, brave though uncertain.

A woman fell one day as Ogóne passed : her eyes wide staring, her face marked with the black smudges. Ogóne went to her and propped her head on his coat. A boy passed by and stared, turned and ran away, calling strangely :

" 'Ware Black Death ! "

" Who are you ? "

" A friend."

" I'm dying. Oh, my stomach ! "

" I know. Pray."

" Who to ? "

" God."

" I don't want to."

" Pray, before it's too late."

" Why ? "

" I ask you to."

" What shall I say ? "

" Don't say anything. Think on what I say, with all your heart and with all your soul."

" With all my heart and all my soul. Yes ? "

" Merciful God, I have strayed, and my faith

is weak. Strengthen me and turn me to Thee. I have laid too great store on life, and man's conception thereof; but I repent, great God, with all my heart and all my soul. Save me from the end, for Thy great Love is come into my heart. Close my eyes in peace, that I may die in the knowledge of Thee and Thy works. May I be worthy of that Love. Help me die to live again at Thy coming. . . ." The woman closed her eyes; a shiver ran through her frame. Ogóne laid her down and removed his coat from under her.

"Even as You saved me, O God," he said, and moved on.

From the other side of the road, the same boy watched. He came over to Ogóne.

"Is she dead?" he asked.

"She is."

The boy slipped his hand into Ogóne's.

"Mother's dead and father's dead," he said simply. The two moved off together, hand in hand, down the middle of Piccadilly. . . . But it did not appear strange.

His new companion walked back with him to the Club. Members were sleeping on sofas, their wives were there also. The Club had become a refuge, and nobody said aught or showed surprise. He took the boy to his room and spoke to him of the times, whilst the boy listened with wide-open eyes. It was agreed they should be

together. Ogóne wondered where Lorna was.

The dreaded invasion began. In spite of the terrific seas, Red ships brought men in thousands. With shields of gas, they effected landings at different spots on the south-east coast. The British Fleet did its best, but the seas were so heavy that shots fell wide and the gas launched from German machines was more deadly than even the Washington Conference had expected. The British Communist Party that had rushed to welcome the invaders with large red banners were unfortunately stampeded by an unbrotherly gas-shell which dispersed the gallant body by death and flight. Of course, the Party was not up to strength, so many had fallen at Aldgate.

The Panic, therefore, was at its zenith. Law and Order collapsed. Bands wandered the streets shouting madly, shrieking pathetically, trampling unmercifully.

An afternoon, pale and ghostly, brought the first sound of field-guns to the ears of London. It was the British Artillery defending their Capital.

The result was appalling. Crowds assembled in all the open places possible and waited. . . . Hyde Park was closed, and used as a cemetery. Volunteers dug graves and fell at their work. Terror tearing tears from out the eyes of frightened manhood. An invasion seemed incredible.

Not since the Dutch had sailed up the Thames ; not since the Duke of Normandy had landed at Battle had such a thing been known.

And the sound of British guns gave way to the whirr of aircraft as the sky grew overcast with the onrushing planes wheeling and turning like winged witches on *Walpurgis Nacht* ! Tantalizing, waiting their chance, low-flying, choosing a resting-place for their eggs.

" They're 'ere again, Bill ? "

" Yus ? "

" Do yer see 'em ? "

" Lad, I'm going mad, I tells yer. Where did Liz go ? "

" Ain't she 'ere ? "

" Liz, Liz ! Wot are yer doin' ? "

No answer came. The woman was on her knees. eyes closed, hands clasped in prayer. The man saw her at length, watched surprised, then sank beside her.

" Wot do I say, Liz ? "

" Anyfink. Ask Gawd."

So the man closed his eyes and the Lord only knows what he did say ; but the terror held him.

Many noticed and followed suit.

The darkness was descending. Crash ! . . . A bomb out East. Boom ! A gun answering, faintly, sadly.

" God help us ! "

" Amen ! "

"Black Death."

"Where?"

"Everywhere. Little white mice, black eyes, pink eyes, black spots, black spots. . . ."

"'Old yer row. You're off it."

"Black spots on 'er face, she 'ad. Black spots."

The crowd in Trafalgar Square was dense, silent, kneeling, all kneeling, cowed. The lightning flashed. . . .

Ogóne walked towards Trafalgar Square, his new-found little friend holding his hand. He saw the kneeling crowd, and a shiver ran through him. He paused. He thought. The grey clouds, the darkness, the kneeling crowd. He must be above them. He must, he must.

He skirted the crowd and made slowly to the Nelson Column. On the steps bodies lay, people kneeled. Silence. Crash! Crash! Lightning. Guns, guns—or thunder, a cool wind blowing.

"Follow me, *malchick*," he said to the boy as he clambered up till he was on the plinth. He pulled the boy up after him. They leant against a bronze lion. The little boy looked up at him.

"Is it coming?" he asked.

"Soon, yes dear; soon, I expect. Listen! . . . that bomb was nearer."

"Are you frightened, mister?"

"No. Are you, boy?"

"No, mister, not if you ain't. But it ain't 'arf queer."

"Yes. It is queer."

"I ain't frightened." He raised his face. Ogóne kissed him.

The crowd augmented, the bombs came nearer, the thunder and guns blended in a continuous deep roar, the lightning showed scared faces or bowed heads, the cool wind became colder; people shivered and the darkness replaced the pale day. It was but three o'clock. The ruins of St. Martin's Church showed in the flashes and there was no movement in the streets save for huddled forms that ran to swell the crowd. A desire to be with people, a terror of being alone. Apart was a great stillness.

Ogóne rose and walked to the middle of the stonework. He towered above them. He looked to the sky. A gust of cold wind blew his hat from his head and played with his hair. He wore no coat.

The little boy, never moving his eyes, edged towards him and took his hand, pressing close to him. Ogóne turned and saw and a smile spread over his features.

"It won't be long now, boy."

The noise was increasing, the boy could scarcely hear.

Ogóne was standing straight. He held his arms wide. People looked towards him, this one man who seemed unafraid. The lightning showed his figure clearly, whilst in the darkness

he was visible, a black statue standing above the people.

With a loud, clear voice he spoke, and though the noise prevented many from hearing, a word or two could be gathered in between the crashes of bombs and the shrieking of shells. The dreading crowd feasted their eyes on Ogóne as dreading soldiers look to the brave.

“Pray. Pray earnestly for salvation, for the End is at hand. I am Ogóne, the Fire, the Cleansing Fire. I understand. I am come to help.

“In the beginning, God gave Man’s soul to this world that it might progress and learn Wisdom, which consists but of three things : Love, Faith and Hope. Love of one’s fellow-men ; Faith and Belief in one God, and Hope of Higher Spheres wherein to move till the soul be pure and fit for the object of existence, which is Heaven.

“All has been forgot. Your Love has been confined, your Faith wavering, your Hope uncertain. You have been content, while your mind has thought materially, to let your Soul become also affected. Your mind you cannot help—it is bound : your soul is your own. This civilization of ours is ended. What will follow it I cannot tell : it may even be the end of this world, and therefore you will be chosen to live on or die. Even as is written in the Book of the Revelation, so it has come about, following in

perfect sequence. You are divided, for the Beast or for the Lamb—destroyers or builders. Those that have the Light in their souls shall see the Light, but those that have Darkness, shall know no glory, no peace, no comfort.

“Man’s assuredness has been his downfall: he has forgotten his soul.

“Seek, find your souls, now before it is too late, and turn to your God openly, devoid of doubts, agents or intermediaries, for no one can teach you the Godhead save your souls. It is dark: it will be darker, and from the clouds of doubt your prayers will rise, if you pray with all your heart and soul.”

A bomb fell in Whitehall. The crowd crouched lower, incapable of other thought than resignation. Ogóne was still standing, the little boy by his side clutching the tail of his jacket with both hands, his face tear-stained. The lightning became more frequent, but there was no rain. The cold wind blew and circled round the Square. Great puffs of cloud hovered over the heads of the kneelers. The atmosphere was strangely quiet amidst the sounds without this paved spot. Ogóne continued:

“I will try to teach. I will try to save, for I know the end to be near. Concentrate and pray. For those who cannot, make the lightning your votary candles, the thunder your bell, the guns your choir and the clouds your surplices. Pray

for a blue sky and the warmth of the Sun. Pray as servants of God. Pray as soldiers awaiting new orders. Faith can alone be attained by prayer.

"No thunder can be so loud that God will not hear. No time be too short wherein you cannot pray."

Again a crash, a bomb close by, a scream. The noise was terrible. Ogóne's eyes, fixed on the crowd, were taking in everything. A face below, sadly staring, caught his glance.

So she was here! She would be there for the end; with him. Lorna saw and raised her arms to him. Looking her in the eyes he spoke on, straining his voice. The crowd was wedged nearer the column.

"Help me to pray, and I will help you :

"O merciful God, in our ignorance we have made our ideals of clay and we are sad. In our ignorance we believed this world was ours to play with as we willed. In the smallness of our minds we found a greatness and we became assured we could stand alone.

"You gave us the earth and we used of it : the waters and we curbed them : the air and we mastered that as well and we stayed not our hands.

"Help us, Lord, now we turn to Thee. Forgive us, for we have found Faith. We are Thy servants, great God."

A voice from the crowd rose up and shrieked

terribly, in madness : " There is no God ! " The thunder crashed, the darkness thickened. There was a roaring through the thick air.

" There is ! There is ! " cried Ogóne. " The world is dead and there shall be no more sea, but fields in which to walk hand in hand with the angels of God. Look ! Look ! In the heavens, the Light, the Light. . . . "

The air was beaten by wings. One terrible flash of lightning—and the Nelson Column, split in twain, hurtled to the ground, crushing kneeling men and women. A peal of thunder, louder than ever known, and the rain came. . . .

The waters swirled, the air was black, but high up and above there gleamed a light. The last vial was poured, the trumpets blew.

Up, up, up rose the earth as if to beat its face upon the sky : a rushing, whirring speed, and then, that which had been was no more, for the earth collapsed and all bodies perished.

The souls were divided. The wicked returned to start their journey once again : the good lived ; and when the Light came, these were not afraid, neither were they scorched, for in their daily round of life they had sought the Sun and were well accustomed to its glare.

* * * * *

The Light came, and with it a new world. . . .

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